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Easter Day.

April 24, 1859.

PHILIPPIANS III. 10.

"THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION."

I THINK many of you must have felt, as I often have, a kind of disappointment in the language of the Collect which we have been using today. It begins grandly, as we suppose an Easter prayer should begin: "Almighty God, who through Thine only-begotten Son hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life." But what is there answering to this invocation in the words which form the substance of the petition? Do they speak of any visions of glory, such as the opening of that mysterious gate might have prepared us for?—of intercourse with spirits of just men made perfect, such as we might hope to enjoy if the barrier of death was really removed? Not at all. They simply ask the Almighty God, that "as by His special grace preventing us He does put into our minds good desires, so by His continual help we may bring the same to good effect." Is not this a sudden and painful fall? In moments

of strong, highly-braced feeling, when we have regarded Easter as offering at once the greatest gift to the universe and the deepest consolation for individual sorrow, have we not been indignant that we are required to utter words which appear to forget both? If, again, our logical understanding is at work, are we not scandalized (for we demand a logic in prayers as in all other compositions, and revolt at incoherency as implying a want of reverence to the God of order and truth), are we not scandalized, I say, by what looks like a conclusion that has no direct relation with the premises?

The more we love the Book by which we have been educated into a sense of the possibility, the nature, and the awfulness of prayer, the less shall we be disposed to stifle questions of this kind. In reading a famous poem, or in studying a work of art, it is far safer,—it shows a far greater trust in the author,—to confess to ourselves what there is in him which we have not learnt to admire, than to affect a vague and general worship because we suppose we ought to pay it. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in a noble passage of his Lectures, has enforced this duty upon his pupils, strengthening the exhortation by his own example. When he first looked upon an Italian masterwork, he had honesty to own to himself that he did not see how it had deserved its great name. He waited for light, and it came to him. If divines exercised the same wisdom—grounded on the same fidelity to the

verdict of the conscience, and the same trust that what is good will at last prove itself to be good—it is not to be told from how much uneasy scepticism respecting the facts and lessons of Scripture, from how much discontent, dangerous because suppressed, respecting the ordinances and the creeds of the Church, they would save their disciples. Oftentimes they would see the very same change gradually taking place in them which our great painter describes in himself. That which had seemed to them tame, cold, ungenial in the Bible story,—vague or too definite and formal in the words of the old Confession,—would come forth in its simplicity and power; would be seen to have been dimmed in its lustre by the artificial, meretricious objects they had been previously contemplating; would compel the admiration which they had refused to counterfeit, sweeping away what opposed its entrance.

And where this is not the case, where the perplexity, even the dislike, remains in reference to this or that special point or passage, a habit of confidence and sympathy will be formed; a conviction that that which calls itself the Word of God or the Church of God, does not ask to be buttressed by human apologies,—that it can trust itself to the Living God, from whom it claims to proceed,—that it invokes His aid to awaken the conscience and reason of men, not to throw them into deeper sleep.

I. I am especially anxious that we should consider

what that apparent bathos in our Easter Collect means, because I suspect that, in reflecting upon it, we shall perceive that the framers of this prayer looked upon the Resurrection from a point of view which is not as familiar to us as it ought to be. We dwell upon the *fact* of Christ's Resurrection; upon the evidences which establish it; upon the inferences which may be drawn from it. St. Paul also dwelt upon the *fact*. It was the very ground of his Gospel to mankind. The *evidences* for it he did not produce at any length. Writing to the sceptical Greeks of Corinth, he speaks of Christ's appearing to the eleven,—to five thousand brethren,—to himself as one born out of due time; he says little about the credibility of their testimony. If the Corinthians distrusted them, he took no pains to prove that they might not be deceived themselves, or might not have a purpose of deceiving others. *Inferences* from Christ's Resurrection he drew in answering those who said that the dead were not to rise. But Fact, Evidences, Inferences, were all inseparably bound up with the idea which is expressed in the words of the text, "The Power of *His Resurrection.*" Two or three instances taken from his different letters, and always from some significant, characteristic portions of them, will illustrate what I am saying.

In the opening of the Epistle to the Romans, where he is declaring the message which he has delivered to Jews and Gentiles, he affirms that it is the "*Gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ, who was made*

of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with POWER, *according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.*" If you read that Epistle carefully, comparing the passage I have just read with such as these: —"*Like as Christ was raised from the dead in the glory of the Father;*" "*Death hath no more dominion over Him; for in that He died, He died unto sin once; in that He liveth, He liveth unto God,*"—you will perceive, I am sure, that the Apostle always thought of the fact of the Resurrection as a manifestation of the Divine relation in which Christ stood to the Eternal Father; of the Divine Life which dwelt in Him because He was the Son of God; of the Divine energy which was every hour sustaining that life, and which, in weakness, agony, on the cross, in the sepulchre, sustained it still.

If you turn from this letter to that of which I spoke just now,—to that magnificent chapter of it which has become identified in our minds with our Burial Service,—you will find the doctrine of a divine power exercised first according to an eternal law in Christ as the Head of the race, then in all its members—coming forth in every sentence, I might say in every word. Take away this assertion of a power,—inward, mysterious, discernible to us only in its effects, but most orderly, uniform, incapable of being suspended without the subversion of the whole economy of the Universe, without the destruction of all its

principles,—substitute for this assertion the announcement of the Resurrection merely as a great exception to the course of nature,—and that chapter loses not only all its sublimity, but all that has cheered the heart of any mourner, all that has given him strength to endure life and death. Here is St. Paul's evidence. You do not care to believe fishermen or a tentmaker? Why should you? And how can you, even if they had all outward demonstrations of their story at hand, even if they had no experience, traditions, mighty motives against them? The power is not in us, but in the Resurrection itself. That power, we believe, is acting on the human spirit; that will enable it to receive our proclamation that Death is not part of the order of the world, but of its disorder; and that Death has been overcome, not by a hero who is exalted above the sufferings of men, but by a Son of God who has entered into them all.

Of this Power he speaks in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where he again connects it with our Lord's resurrection. "*I cease not,*" he says, "*to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to*

us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Here the power or energy which quickened the soul and the body of Jesus Christ, which made it impossible that He should be holden of death, which delivered Him from it and from every bondage, which raised Him to the right hand of God, is declared to be the selfsame power which works in us to believe,—which opens the eyes of our understanding,—which reveals to us the hope of our calling. The words sound marvellous; it is difficult to bring them into the least connection with the habits of thought and feeling which prevail amongst us,—with our religious or our philosophical notions. But they stand written. Those who receive the New Testament as a divine authority cannot shrink from them,—must not explain them away. And those who have not yet acknowledged it may consider seriously whether this is not a message which is at least in harmony with itself, and which would remove many discords in human life and experience, if it could be accepted.

II. Assuredly those who wrote the prayers of which our Liturgy is composed did accept it. They connected Easter Eve and Easter Day with Christian

Baptism. They believed that we are baptized into the death of Christ; that we are buried with Him in baptism; that we rise to a new life by faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from death. In other words, they looked upon the Resurrection-day as the New Birth-day of the world; as that which declared what man is, according to the true law of his being; what each man is bound to think of himself. He has a right to speak of himself as carrying about with him that which is evil, doomed, sold to death. He has no right to say that *he* is evil, accursed, doomed to death. He is to count himself, so says St. Paul, "*dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" He is to claim the condition of a redeemed creature; of one who has been reclaimed from the dominion of death; of one who has been declared to be under the law of the Resurrection; to be under the power of the Resurrection. If we are to form any other estimate of our condition than this, the Apostles, as they themselves say, were false witnesses of God; they testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He raised not up, if so be that this is not true concerning them whose nature He bore.

You see what must follow from this. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of our being brought under the powers of the world to come; under the influence and operation of that Kingdom of Heaven which Christ preached to the Jews; which He said had come

nigh to them; which He said was about to come with power, not only among them, but among all nations. The whole history of Christendom is nothing but a confession of these powers,—nothing but a continuous evidence how real and mighty they have been. The superstitions which have defiled and disgraced the Christian Church, which have reproduced Heathendom in the midst of it, have not sprung from this confession. They have sprung from the sense of a spiritual power in minds and hearts which checked it, shrank from it, were unwilling to entertain it, and therefore were ready to conceive of it as acting upon them from without, as clothed in sensible shapes and idols. It has sprung from the cowardice and dishonesty of priests, who have played with this unbelief, have sanctioned it, have catered to it, till they have peopled the world afresh with a set of propitious and unpropitious divinities, and have led their votaries to fancy that the Everlasting God, the Father of their spirits, is the enemy whom they have most to fear, from whom they have most need to protect themselves. The belief that He raised His Son from the dead,—that in raising Him, He raised up us also, whom He had created in Him, to be His children, that we might fight His battles and work His will,—has been changed into this horrible and ghastly unbelief, which becomes the more horrible and ghastly, the more it adopts the facts and doctrines of the Gospel into its service and converts them into its likeness. For

would it not be better never to speak of the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ, if these are only to make the grave look more fearful to us, and the presence of God less attractive? Should not we be silent about atonement and reconciliation, if we understand by them greater alienation from our Father in heaven, and our brethren upon earth?

III. But all the darkness which has mingled with the light in the Church and in our hearts has not sufficed to put out the light in either. And as we read of the brave deeds that have been done by Christian men in every age, of those deeds which have most improved the condition of the world, however the world may have despised them or punished the authors of them, we feel sure—their own testimony being clear on the point, their errors and sins, whenever they have taken credit to themselves for their high impulses and heroic intentions amply confirming it—that a power which they could obey, but which would not obey their caprices, has been determining their counsels, kindling their energies, bringing forth their deeds; that it has been a power not manifesting itself in sudden gusts, but working evenly and tranquilly, conquering restlessness, not causing it; that it has been a life-giving, life-restoring power; that it has been that power, and no other, which, as the Apostles teach us, was inspiring at every moment the will and heart of Jesus, and which quickened at last the body that He had given up to die. A resurrection life, a re-

surrection power there has been in these men,—there has been in the nations for which they lived and died,—in the Church into which God had engrafted them. This alone has prevented one or the other from perishing; this alone has been the cause of one or the other starting again into vital energy after years, almost ages, of decay; of their putting forth fresh fruits, and passing out of the dreariest winter into a joyous spring. We can explain the facts in no other way. The power of His resurrection has been there. It is that very power which first moved upon the face of the waters; that very power which has been striving with men in all ages, reclaiming, civilizing, renewing. It is the power of that Word who was in the beginning, without whom nothing was made that was made, whose Life was always the Light of men. But it is that power concentrated and manifested in the Word made flesh; that power proved to be stronger than death, the grave, or Hell; that power asserting its right in and over the will of man, and over the creation of which man is the lord.

IV. And do we not know, brethren, each of us—ought not we at least to know—that this power is that which has begotten in *us* desires that cannot be of the earth, because they raise us above the earth, and tell us we did not spring out of it; desires which cannot be from ourselves, because they make us feel that we are not our own, and that to be shut up in self is to be in torment? Such desires do visit us. Feeble they

may be; they may just utter the infant's cry which proves them to be alive, and then become silent, apparently ceasing to exist. Or if they live on, it may be that their life is so painful and sickly, in so strange an atmosphere, amidst such ungenial companions, that we wish we could kill them, or hope that they will die without our being stained by that guilt. But have they not a Parent to whom they are dear, who can and will take care of them? Is there no mark on them which assures us that they have a high and celestial origin? Oh, believe it, theirs is no mortal nor merely angelic Sire! He who raised up Jesus from the dead is awakening and sustaining in you any one of these desires to know the truth and to be true; to resist the evil which would draw you into itself; to deliver others from it; to drive it beyond the limits of God's creation.

V. And is it then a low and grovelling prayer, unworthy of the Easter season, degrading our thoughts of the victory that has been won for us and for mankind, that He who, by His special grace preventing us, has put into our minds good desires, by his continual help will bring the same to good effect? Could you have a more wonderful, a more practical test than that which this prayer offers you, and enables you to apply, of the triumph over death, of the opening the new gate into life? Could any ecstatic language about the state of departed spirits, about the good things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, enable us

equally to realize our communion with the one, actually to participate in the other? To be governed by Christ in all the movements of his being, in all his purposes, in all the issues of these movements and purposes, is not this the freedom of the most glorified spirit? To be able to do what one longs to do,—our longings being first in accordance with the divinest mind, prompted by the divinest inspiration,—is not this a good thing beyond the grasp of eye and ear, answering to the desires of the heart, but surpassing them all? And this, on the strength of Christ having overcome Death and opened the gate of Life, we are encouraged to ask! And this petition, because His risen Life is ours, we are to believe that He will begin to answer at once—will answer completely hereafter!

Brethren, there is no bathos in the feeling of this prayer, no want of sequence in its logic. But it does imply that stooping of the king to the subject—of the Creator to the creature—which is implied in every act of Christ's life on earth; God in Christ conquering death for us; God in Christ, by the selfsame loving power, conquering all that death in us which prevents us from acting out His gracious purposes. There is a disregard of those chains by which the mere formal logician tries to prevent words from escaping out of those little dens within which he has confined them. Death is not limited either to body or spirit. It is treated as the common enemy of

both, from which the same Deliverer is setting first the nobler, then the inferior, free. And we may, each of us may, ascertain for himself how much the using of this prayer helps us in learning the mystery of death and of life. During the weeks of Lent, in which we have been hearing of the calamities of other men, or entering into trials of our own, there will have been thoughts put into our minds—often perplexing to ourselves—of some good we might do, some wrong we might redress, some disease that has penetrated into the vitals of our society—the seeds of which we can detect too clearly in ourselves—that we should be assisting to cure. We are too well used, alas! each of us, to see such thoughts in the blossom, and then to see them falling before they ripen further, or nipped by the frost just as they have budded. Experience has made us callous to such sights. But they are unspeakably sad. To help to pave Hell with these half-formed, broken resolutions —should we not strive earnestly that we may not do that? Yet if these thoughts are our own, that is their ultimate destiny. But if whatever is not fantastic or frivolous in them comes from that power which wrought in Christ when it raised Him from the dead, may we not, shall we not, commit them to Him, in full confidence that they are His, and that they shall be brought to good effect; that they shall bear fruit by which men shall be blessed, which God Himself will behold with delight, and will rejoice to gather

in? If we who preach have to think with sorrow and shame of all the words we have spoken, which we felt and knew to be true and living and mighty, and yet which we suffered to remain mere words that must rise up to condemn us, because our deeds answer to them so ill; if you who have heard these words ringing in your ears, sometimes in your consciences, and have felt that they might be seeds of life, recollect also how they have dropped by the wayside and were speedily carried off you knew not whither—oh! shall not we ask, each for himself, each for the other, that henceforth the power of Christ's Resurrection may be felt in our words,—may enter into our hearts,—that men may see the good works that spring out of them, and glorify our Father in Heaven?

Second Sunday after Easter.

May 8, 1859.

ROMANS IV. 5.

"TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT, BUT BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY, HIS FAITH IS COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

You have been repeating all this week the prayer, "Almighty Father, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification, grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve Thee in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Any one who speaks upon the text I have chosen to those who have used that prayer, must expect to be tried by a severe rule. You have been looking up to an Almighty Father, and confessing Him as the sole Author of your righteousness. How will you tolerate me if I ascribe that righteousness to the belief of some tenet or opinion? You have contrasted justification with sin; you have connected it with Christ's resurrection. You will condemn me of shameful profaneness if I turn it into a symbol or a phrase, to be

used like the colours at an Election, for distinguishing one party from another. You have assumed that there is a power in Christ's justification and in His risen life to make you pure and true. If I shall make any statements respecting justification which weaken your sense of that power,—which divorce it from your moral life,—you will at once reject them as inconsistent with that higher apprehension of it to which the act of worship has raised you.

But is not the prayer a protection against another kind of danger, into which I might lead you? That truth which you have confessed with such solemnity on your knees,—that of which nothing but adoration or prayer is an adequate utterance,—has not surely been too highly esteemed. There is no fear of exaggerating its importance; it can require no qualifications; it cannot bear to be frittered away by counteracting notions and opinions. We do not find, as we pray, that those who have rated man's independent righteousness at the lowest, have spoken too disparagingly; or that those who have exalted God's righteousness most exclusively, have committed any dangerous excess; or that those who have most confidently sought help in the perfectness of the one from the nothingness of the other, have been making a rash experiment. In the region where there is the greatest awe there is also the greatest courage; he who trembles most ventures most; it is on the dry, cold level of earth that we walk as if on ice, sliding

back as many steps as we advance; now proclaiming some hardy sentiment, taking care the next moment to make it innocent of meaning.

The preacher, then, who follows where prayer has gone before, is put to a trial which is healthy for his own soul and for the souls of those who hear him. He is warned that every great truth has its plausible, popular counterfeits, which are easily mistaken for it, till they are brought into the light of God's countenance, are confronted with His reality; but which, when they are, grow pale and fade away. He is reminded that he is promoting the growth of such counterfeits, and giving them stability, when he enfeebles or narrows the principle they misrepresent; when he does not labour that it may be exhibited in greater strength and largeness than ever. Which end he is most likely, under God's teaching, to compass, when he follows strictly and painfully the language of Scripture, which is not the language of school logic, fixing terms and establishing propositions, but the language of Revelation, setting forth the Will and Mind of the Creator, and His actual relations to the creature; the language therefore which devotion finds to be its own proper ground, and to be a suitable expression for the wants and longings of all human beings. Acting upon this maxim, we shall perceive, I think, in the words of the text, a beautiful exposition of the principle which the whole Epistle to the Romans is occupied with,

and which the Sundays after Easter should specially bring home to us.

I. It has often been observed that we suffer great loss of clearness in studying St. Paul, through the change which our translators have introduced, and which perhaps the necessities of our language compelled, in the use of the words 'righteous,' 'righteousness,' 'justify,' 'justification.' If we could have been reminded, it has been said, at every turn, that these are all cognate words, the relations of which to each other can never for an instant have been lost in the Apostle's mind, we should often have an entirely different impression of his discourse. I admit fully the importance of the observation, but I doubt whether the simplicity of earnest readers does not in great measure suggest and supply the connection which philology demands, and whether the break, so far as it is actual and not verbal, is not mainly owing to the artificial methods of divines. One who studies the Epistle to the Romans for practical ends, perceives that it begins with setting forth God as the Righteous Being,—God as revealing or manifesting His righteousness. Such a person finds in that statement an interpretation of the Old Testament,—of its main purpose, and of all its subordinate incidents. What is the whole book but this—the Righteous and Living Being coming forth out of the secret place, that men may be acquainted with Him who has formed them after His likeness? The true-

hearted reader, whether he may utter this interpretation to himself or not, accepts it when it is offered. He would take it from the humblest teacher, because it is the thing which he is in search of; he certainly will not refuse the lesson or suffer himself to be robbed of it when it is imparted to him, with the profoundest knowledge and experience of all the inward needs to which it corresponds, by an inspired Apostle. God, St. Paul says, is from first to last declaring righteousness, the righteousness of His own Being; that which He himself is; to which all wrong and all falsehood is opposite. Whatever is implied in the word 'justification,'—in whatever way the fact which that word indicates may affect an individual or the human race, this must be the root or principle of it; apart from this it must be unintelligible. It may be painful to a reader, when he meets with anything in the language which loosens the chain of the Apostle's thought; he may be delighted, by the help of a scholar, to repair the links; but he will not, cannot believe that the effect which is said to proceed from the revelation of God's righteousness is not essentially akin to that righteousness.

II. When therefore he reads such a text as this, "*To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly,*" his thought at once fixes upon the last words, "*Him that justifieth the ungodly.*" He does not speculate first upon the words 'working' and 'believing;' these, he is confident, will explain

themselves in due time. He sees that the Apostle is declaring God to be the justifier; he is certain that no assertion about faith or works can interfere with this primary one, or can be anything save an expansion or development of it. And the expression, "justifying the *ungodly*," illustrated by the case of Abraham, to which the Apostle refers, is surely a wonderful help in ascertaining what divine act is denoted by this name. A Being who is righteous makes Himself known to man, who has been ignorant of Him, but in whose mind there have been strange witnesses and prophecies of One to whom he owed allegiance,—of One for whom something within him is seeking, from whom something within him is turning away. All visible things are claiming him for their own; his inclinations are asserting their authority over him; still there is a struggle and protest. What does it mean? One speaks to him who makes him understand that He can command; that He has a right to command; that He is his Friend. This is—must be—that Righteous Person towards whom all those questionings of the heart within were pointing; from whom things without and slavish tendencies within were withdrawing him. The voice speaks to that within him which alone can hear it. He believes it, and obeys it. The Righteous Being has raised him to a new level, taken him out of his confusion and ungodliness, justified all his anticipations, justified him. He is not the servant of these things which

claim him as their servant; he is the servant of another. In these things is no righteousness. They have a force in them before which he must often shrink; but it is not a force to which his conscience can bow; that demands another object, another ruler. It has found that the Creator of these things is its Ruler. The order impressed upon them was the expression of that righteousness in Him which they knew not, but which the man is made to know.

III. You see the verb 'justify' is not so far unlike our ordinary sense of it as, in the first discovery of its relation to the adjective 'righteous' and the substantive 'righteousness,' we are ready to fancy. We speak of an anticipation as justified by the event. Supposing that anticipation to be something so inward, so essential to me, that my own very existence is involved in it, *I* am justified by it. He who, taking hold of the spirit of man, raises it to the full, distinct apprehension and possession of that which it is meant to apprehend and possess, and yet of which in itself it is destitute, justifies it. If for this expression you substitute that of 'making righteous,' you might convey an important truth, but it would still be an imperfect one, and, like that you abandon, liable to perversion. For the man is not made righteous in himself; he is raised out of himself; he is lifted up to acknowledge the righteousness of Him who has formed him and revealed Himself to him. That is his blessing, that is his elevation. His sheep and

oxen are a property; he overlooks them, holds them against others. That is the condition of material treasures. The Righteousness he cannot thus appropriate, cannot thus contemplate in himself, cannot say of it that it is not another man's as well as his own. He possesses it only when he looks up to it, when he contemplates it as above him, like the sun; yet as truly his as the sun is his while he dwells in its warmth and light, when he does not choose to be in the dark. The history of a man's exaltation to such a state is perhaps on the whole indicated as satisfactorily by the expression 'justify' as by any other. All words must, in their nature, bring some side of the truth into greater clearness, leave the other in comparative shadow. The thought of a personal Being owning His creature, claiming him for his proper state, answering his enemies and accusers for him, enabling him to lift himself above them, is strikingly and felicitously exhibited in it. To complete the idea, and to prevent one part of it from setting itself up in opposition to the other, we have to observe how carefully St. Paul connects Justification with Righteousness; how resolutely he refuses to consider it as an abstraction which can be divorced from the Righteous Being who is the Author of it; from the man who is unrighteous so long as he is *ungodly*, but with all capacity of being righteous because created to know God; from the process by which this capacity is awakened in him, and made effectual for its proper end.

IV. And thus the language of the Apostle, "*To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,*" commend themselves, without cavilling or debating, to the heart and conscience. If God speaks not as the things around us speak, to the eye and ear, but to the man himself,—if it is to him as a spiritual creature that the revelation of Righteousness comes,—how must the speech be responded to? how must the revelation be entertained? The Apostle says, The speech is responded to by the man's believing it; the revelation of the Righteous Being is entertained by the man's putting his trust in Him. He does not work; does not seek to commend himself to this Being; does not strive by great efforts to climb up to Him. The spirit within confesses its Master; believes that He has sought for that, which could not otherwise have sought for Him; believes that it has nothing in itself, that it has all in Him; consents to be raised to its true condition; becomes obedient. Any course but this must be one of self-will; a course of a creature choosing to be apart from its Creator, choosing not to acknowledge Him as its author and its end, resolute to build upon another ground—a ground which must be of sand. The more hills it would heap up to scale Heaven with, the more is it engaged in a Giants' war with the Omnipotent; the more must it look to be confounded and crushed.

V. And the case, it is St. Paul's great object to

show, is not altered, but strengthened, by the fact that men have become not ungodly only as Abraham was, but conscious of transgression and sin to a degree in which he could not be conscious of them. It is very natural for a man to say, 'Having committed actual 'and numerous offences; having broken God's law; 'knowing that I have done it; feeling in myself all 'the moral corruption which is the effect of having 'done it; I am in altogether a different position from 'him to whom the first revelation of God's righteous-'ness was made; I cannot in his way be justified; I 'cannot rise up a new man by believing in Him that 'justifieth the ungodly; for me that is needful which 'was not for him, a series of acts whereby God's pu-'nishment of the evil I have done may be averted, the 'stains which it has left in my soul may be obliterated.' That such reasoning is *natural,* all who know themselves and history will acknowledge. That it is *false;* that it is a direct inversion of the truth, Experience, Reason, and Scripture equally prove. Not because the man has brought himself into an utterly evil, corrupt, degraded state, is he therefore to labour that he may bring some worthy fruit out of that soil; the more evidence he has had what is its natural produce, the more must he despair of cultivating anything upon it which is not vile, or which he can offer to God. His sin has been, from the first, trying to live without God, distrusting Him, setting up his self-will. That lie he is called upon to abandon when he is called

upon to believe in Him that justifieth the ungodly. He is told that he may stand upon his right ground, upon that which God intended for him, not upon that which he has made for himself—that ground in which God Himself will work, and in which he will work as God's husbandman, not as his own. David, therefore, fallen into adultery and murder, found himself obliged, St. Paul says, to act precisely upon the same principle as Abraham, for the first time apprehending the Righteous Being at all. If the one was to be delivered out of his filthiness, he must trust in the God of Righteousness, who hated his evil and desired truth in his inward parts; as much as the other, who only rose out of ignorance and darkness to a recognition of that which God is, and of that which He means men to be. David had less right than Abraham to dream or hope that any good thing was in himself or could come out of himself. He was more bound therefore to renounce himself and seek righteousness and life in another. David was more bound than Abraham to believe that the character of God was not changed because he was changed; for he had more evidence that his own change was a revolt from God, and that he was in a state of contradiction with Him. He was more bound than Abraham was to believe that God did not will that he should remain in that state of contradiction, but desired to bring him out of it. The principle therefore is immutable; applicable to all conditions of human society and of

individual feeling. In all cases the man who seeks by working, by efforts external or internal of his own to justify himself and bring himself into a righteous state, is guilty of disobedience, is depriving himself of all power to work freely, truly, completely; in all cases the man who believes in God as a Justifier and Deliverer, and turns to Him, has righteousness reckoned or imputed to him.

VI. Which phrase surely is most naturally interpreted by all that has gone before. To ascribe a fiction to God,—to say that He holds men to be that which they are not really,—is to contradict the primary idea of justification, that it proceeds from a Righteous Being, and that Righteousness is the end of it; it is to overthrow the foundations of all confidence in God and among men. From all such notions may God in His mercy deliver us! May He forgive us for having blasphemed His Name by the faintest hint that He is not the God of Truth, and so for having weakened the sense of Righteousness in men's minds at the very moment when we were professing to set up the standard of it; for having given sanction to falsehoods in the ordinary doings of the world, by mixing one with the most sacred principles and hopes of the Church! The necessity for such perilous inventions arises from our unbelief in the express teaching of St. Paul. We suppose that man looks upon himself truly when he assumes that he is without God in the world. Now St. Paul affirms this to be our lie. We

try to ignore the presence of God, we deny our relation to Him; that is the secret of all our evil. Every act becomes contradictory, because this huge contradiction is at the root of it. God treats men as what they are, not as what they are when they yield to the spirit of lies. He affirms them not to be independent of Him, not to be outcasts from Him. And confessing their relation to Him, believing that He accepts them, that He justifies the ungodly, they come into their true, reasonable state. Their faith is not Righteousness; for faith, like sight, is nothing in itself. Our sight carries us to an object beyond ourselves. Our faith does the same. Its object is Righteousness, a Righteous Being. And He who has called forth this faith gives it what it wants, presents Himself to it. The Apostle's language, that He reckons or imputes Righteousness to it, is skilfully devised to express how entirely it is in God, and yet in how strict and full a sense the man, by acknowledging it in another, possesses it himself. The forms of sense express naturally what cannot be expressed without a contradiction in the terms of the understanding. And the heart of the simple peasant owns the veracity of the language, and connects it with what he has experienced, not only in his relations with God, but in those with his fellow-creatures.

VII. There is another part of the Epistle to the Romans which cannot be separated from this. It concerns the national justification of the Jew. He

was treated by no fiction as the member of a righteous Nation. His circumcision declared him to be set apart by God; his law proceeded from the mouth of God; his history was the history of God's government. On the strength of one or both of these gifts he claimed to have a righteousness which other men had not. St. Paul examines each pretext. Was it circumcision? But that was the seal of the righteousness which Abram acquired by trusting God when he was uncircumcised. Was it the law? But that, instead of making any man to whom it spoke righteous, convinced him of sin. Was it the mere arbitrary favour of God to a tribe, descending from father to son by hereditary right? But the history spoke of eldest sons being continually set aside, and the younger being the children of the promise. Whither did these arguments lead? Not to the conclusion that the Jew had less claim to be righteous than his fathers, but to the conclusion that he must assert his claim as they did. He must believe in the righteous God. Then he would have the blessing of circumcision; he would appeal from the curse of the law to the mind of the Lawgiver; he would understand his divine election; he would become a blessing to all the families of the earth. For he was elected to be this,—elected to tell all nations of the Righteous God who justified the ungodly, who condemned sin and delivered from sin, who imputed His own righteousness to those that trusted in Him.

VIII. This was St. Paul's own vocation and work. He was to tell Jews and Gentiles that God had fulfilled the meaning of the Jewish election, of circumcision, of the law, by sending forth His elect in whom He delighted, by enduing Him with His Spirit, by giving up His body to death, by raising him from the dead, by justifying Him as His Son, by justifying in Him the nature which He had taken. Jews and Gentiles were all alike convicted of being sinners in themselves. Jews and Gentiles were alike declared to be righteous in Him. St. Paul therefore could bid one as much as the other take up their position as redeemed, as righteous, as sons of God. He could say to all who had claimed that position, "*Count yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ, whom He raised from the dead.*"

That was our Easter Day lesson. It explains what Baptism meant to the Roman Christian of the first century. It explains what Baptism means to us in this century. By it we renounce for ourselves and for our children any standing-ground save this, of trust in God, who has justified us by raising Christ from the dead. By it we declare that He endows us with His Righteousness. By it we declare all self-righteousness to be accursed and monstrous. By it we say that the Righteousness of God is bestowed upon all alike in His Son, that He is awakening all to put it on, by His Spirit.

IX. I come back then to the point from which I

started. This justification by faith is no tenet of ours, which is to distinguish us from other people, which is to raise us above any. If it does not take from us all pretext and desire to exalt ourselves or to separate ourselves from other men, we have not yet entered into the meaning of it. On the other hand, if it does not lead us to think nobly of the race for which Christ died and rose again, of which He is the Head, which He has invested with His Righteousness, we have not yet entered into the meaning of it. If it does not lead us to give thanks for the faith, hope, manliness, gentleness, that we find in any of His creatures, if it does not show us that He is the final blessedness of His creatures, we have not yet entered into the meaning of it. No dogma of divinity is it, but the staff of the pilgrim, the sword of the fighter, the strength of national as of individual life. If we lose it, we lose that which has given England earnest thinkers, manly doers. For England, like Judæa, is called out to be a witness of God's Righteousness to the earth. England, like Judæa, will be lost if she glorifies herself on her own. The strongest of her sons will perish if he begins to trust in himself,—the weakest, who trusts in the living God, may defy earth and hell to confound him.

Third Sunday after Easter.

May 15, 1859.

LUKE XXIV. 30, 31.

"AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS HE SAT AT MEAT WITH THEM, HE TOOK BREAD, AND BLESSED IT, AND BRAKE, AND GAVE TO THEM. AND THEIR EYES WERE OPENED, AND THEY KNEW HIM; AND HE VANISHED OUT OF THEIR SIGHT."

WE are all apt to suppose that those who lived in the first century, had certain spiritual advantages above those who live in the nineteenth; that the inhabitants of Palestine had some access to the Eternal World, which is denied to the inhabitants of England. Apostles and Evangelists cannot be accused of fostering this opinion; they take pains to dispel it. They represent our Lord, before His Passion, as conversing with them respecting a Kingdom of God. Of this Kingdom, they say they had only the most confused glimpses. He told them that they could not bear then what they should know after He had gone away from them. They describe themselves as misunderstanding His words, as failing most when they fancied they were wisest; as being instructed by ter-

rible experience that they were not less cowardly or heartless than any about them.

But if before the Resurrection they were to discover their likeness to other men, we might have supposed that the appearance to them after it would have been of a very special character,—such as would mark the superiority of the age which witnessed it to all after-ages. There is a marked difference between the narratives of the forty days after the Resurrection, and of those which preceded. Christ appeared rarely; vanished quickly. While He was present to their bodily eyes, it seemed His chief lesson to them that His intercourse with them was not dependent upon *that* presence. He was preparing them for a time when they would not be able even for a few moments to gaze upon Him. That time was the time to which He would have them look forward. That time would be the commencement of their true knowledge of Him, of their full communion with Him. But that is the time when the Apostles would stand on the same level with us.

The story of the two disciples going to the village of Emmaus, records the most remarkable of those appearances; none is described with the same minuteness. And it is the one which men in later ages have most connected with their own experiences; the one which has done most to bridge over the chasm between them and those who saw and handled the Word of Life. They have been sure

that it was written to tell them that this Word of Life is not far from any of them; that it is their fault, and not His, if they do not hear His voice and follow Him. Let us consider the narrative, and see how this impression has been produced.

I. "*And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.*" When you consider what those things were which happened,—what impression they have left on all human society,—how, after eighteen centuries, Passion Week is still remembered in every city of Europe,—you try to imagine what those must have felt who were on the spot, just at the moment, and who had all personal attachment and reverence to deepen their amazement. Perhaps they will not be able to speak at all; if they do, what words will come from their lips! All such expectations are disappointed. These men are like other men. They are perplexed and bewildered. They take no measure of the events which they have witnessed. The events must mean something: what that something is, they desire to know. There is a gloom over their hearts; a misty sorrow; the sense of a blank; a craving for some interpreter of their own strange doubts. So much we might guess, if we heard no more of their discourse; presently we shall be sure that it was so. And so we come to perceive that the thoughts of these friends

walking to the village near Jerusalem, were in all essentials like the thoughts of many friends who are walking this day to villages near London. They may not be talking of what happened in the Passion Week; they may not even believe that the events did happen in it which we hold to be of such infinite significance. But they may be asking each other gloomily and despairingly, whether all the hopes they had once cherished of something better and nobler for the world and for themselves have not been scattered; whether friends to whom they looked up have not gone out of their sight or failed to fulfil their promises; whether the tidings they heard in their childhood of a Revelation to man, and a Redemption for men, have not lost their meaning and power, or been changed into prophecies of darkness and evil. How many are living now with this weight on their hearts! How many show by their speech and their looks that they are sad!

II. "*And it came to pass, while they communed together and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him.*" Again, the Evangelist disappoints all the notions we should have formed beforehand of the treatment which is suitable to such an incident as this. A person who has been laid in the grave presents himself suddenly to two men who had been used to see him and speak with him. Surely we shall have a description of His look and man-

ner, if not of theirs; if there is no allusion to any flutter of doubt in the welcome which they give him. There is nothing of all this. His tone is as unimpassioned as before. Jesus draws nigh. He joins the two disciples. They do not know Him. That is the narrative. Nothing is said to heighten the effect of it; not a word to make us feel that this was a new occurrence in the world's history,—an occurrence which would scarcely ever be repeated.'

And why not? Because, brethren, I apprehend it did not strike St. Luke as a new occurrence, or one which would be rarely repeated. He accepted the coming of this stranger to these disciples as the sign of that which had been continually taking place when two men walking near Jerusalem, or walking anywhere else, had communed together and reasoned. He accepted it as a sign of what would take place hereafter in cities and villages he had never heard of, and which had not begun to exist, where men of the same nature should meet and engage in the like arguments. "*Where two or three are gathered together in my name,*" our Lord said, "*there am I in the midst of them.*" If they are asking what bond holds them to each other,—what is meant by their friendship, by their power of communicating each to the other his feeling and suffering; if they are asking who has given them their sympathies, and whether they can survive separation and death, they are asking about His name; and He will show them that it is not a

vain asking, that it is the Name of a living, not of a dead Lord. He will prove that He is in the midst of them, not by revealing Himself to the eyes, but by debating the topics which concern them most, with their hearts and consciences. The advantage, therefore, of these disciples, which seemed at first to be so great, was not in St. Luke's judgment any advantage at all. They were to know Him just as all other men must know Him. Till they knew Him in that way, their eyes would be holden that they should not see Him.

III. "*And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel; and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not His body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels,*

which said that He was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but Him they saw not."

They had been talking long about the things that had happened. Now, at the stranger's call, they try to put their thoughts into some order. The effort must have made them understand the disorder in their minds as they had never understood it before. First came the mere facts, bewildering enough in themselves. There had been a great Teacher, a Prophet, whom the people wondered at, whose deeds and words they felt had come from God. But our priests—the men of God—had said he was worthy of death; they had given Him up to Romans to punish Him as a traitor against the Emperor. God had let them have their way. He had been crucified. Then came their own hopes. We were expecting a Redeemer of Israel. The priests told us we were to expect such a One. They said all the prophets bore witness of such a One. We thought this must be He; there was none other had so many signs of a Redeemer, none who actually broke so many chains. And this has been the end! Then lastly they gather together fragments of evidence, altogether very curious, which they cannot discard absolutely, nor yet credit. They had heard Him say something about coming back to them on the third day. This is the third day. Certain women have told us a strange tale about finding

the sepulchre deserted, and seeing a vision of angels. Men whom we can trust better have confirmed part of their story.

A most faithful summary, brethren, of half-formed beliefs, opinions, expectations, arguments!—such as dwell in a number of minds at this day; beliefs, opinions, expectations, which some desire to scatter, which some tremble to touch lest they should fall to pieces, and so leave the heart utterly empty; but which the Stranger who appeared to the two friends as they walked and were sad, will sift and winnow, because He will not have His disciples content with anything less than the Truth which He said would make them free. He will sustain all the dreams they are cherishing of a redemption for Israel. But He knows that there is another dream behind that, which must also be realized—and realized first—the dream of a Redemption of mankind.

IV. "*Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*"

The words sound stern and harsh. For were not these honest, earnest men, genuine disciples, seekers after truth, if they were ever so much perplexed; if they were astray in the pursuit? Could they be called "*fools, and slow of heart*"? Brethren, it is

not worth while to address such language *except* to earnest men,—to those who are looking for truth, and would die rather than not find what they are looking for. They understand such roughness as this; they welcome it as coming from a Friend; their consciences own the force of it; their hearts taste the sweetness of the kernel which lies within the bitter husk. 'What! you have been doubting whether it was 'possible that a Redeemer of Israel should die and 'rise again; whether a few fond women could be 'sufficient witnesses of a fact so utterly improbable. 'Ask your own selves whether a Redeemer *ought* not 'to suffer, ought not to be glorified through suffering. 'Ask yourselves from what bondage you want to be 'redeemed. Ask yourselves whether any one who 'did not bear death with you and for you, could set 'you above the power of it. And then see whether 'the Book which you have held to be most sacred, 'and yet which has been for the most part a collection 'of dead letters to you, does not speak from first to 'last of God Himself as a Redeemer, of God Him-'self as working out the salvation of His creatures; 'of God Himself as meeting His creatures in a Man. 'See whether the shout of a King, of a Son of God, 'does not ring through all its records; is not heard 'amidst the thunders of Sinai, and in the voice to 'the boy sleeping in the chamber near the temple,— 'amidst the prayers and thanksgivings of psalmists, '—in the anguish of prophets.'

You wonder, perhaps, that a walk of threescore furlongs should have been long enough for the discourse which is here hinted at. Could He in that time trace the stream of God's Revelation from its mountain bed to the ocean? Brethren, have you never felt how some passage of history or poetry with which you have been familiar for years, has suddenly caught light, and has illuminated the whole region behind, around, before it? Have you never studied a subject in a kind of despair, wondering what link it is you have missed, what diligence you ought to have exercised that you have spared? And suddenly a clue seems to be given you; the paths look more manifold. even more intricate than ever; but the hopelessness is gone; you see your way; each new step is a step towards discovery. Apply this experience to the case before us, and you may see that the Stranger, in teaching the disciples to read His own Name beneath every Song, Prayer, and Narrative,—may have imparted to them an entirely new sense of the unity of the Scriptures, though He will at the same time have given them a feeling of their variety and of their relation to themselves which they never had before; though He will have proved that they deserved and would reward a life-long investigation.

V. "*And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went; and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide*

with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them." I am afraid you should suspect me of wishing to make a sentimental or figurative application of this passage or any part of it; whereas my anxiety is to take it literally, and so to ascertain its practical and universal signification. I should think it a miserable perversion to speak of the house in which these disciples resided as a metaphor for the human heart, or to suppose that Jesus did not actually enter it with bodily feet. Not only would the great doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body, which is so integral and mighty a portion of Christ's Gospel to mankind, be weakened and endangered by such a frivolous method of interpretation; the inward force of the lesson perishes in our efforts to make it less corporeal. We cannot suppose that the words "*Abide in me*" are honest and substantial words in reference to the spirit of man, because we have explained away the common earthly words which correspond to them. If we adhere to the manly teaching of our Child's Catechism respecting Sacraments, and confess that the outward part or sign is of highest value *because* it assures us of the reality of the thing signified, we escape out of that Limbo of Vanity between heaven and earth, where nothing is, but all things seem,—a region of notions and fantasies which insult us with a perpetual promise that is never fulfilled.

I do therefore regard our Lord's accompanying the disciples to their house as a most simple action, just

as you would suppose it to be from St. Luke's narrative. But it is not less simple, if we take it as a sign of a truth in which all human beings are interested, as well as these two Jews. To believe that He is with us in our walks, and with us when we sit down to meat; that by the very constitution of our being we cannot be alone; that He is there when we perceive it least, and that all our perception of what He is, of what we are, and of the world in which He has placed us, is awakened by Him,—there is nothing strange and fantastic in this. It is what we all profess in words. We should not call ourselves Christians if we did not. And oh! some day shall it not become to us a faith in deed?—a faith that will make mysteries light, and not dark; that will transfigure our whole existence?

VI. "*And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.*"

The guest has become the entertainer. He breaks the bread, He distributes it. Till He takes upon Himself that character, they do not know Him. He has opened to them the Scriptures. He has made hearts that had been dreary and cold burn within them. That He is a Prophet, they cannot doubt. He speaks as one who knows. But that He is *the* Prophet, the King, the Christ, they have not discovered. It is this act which reveals Him. They have not detained him

by some effort of theirs. He came with intent to bless them. But it is not the revelation to the eye which contains the blessing,—that is granted for an instant, and is over.

Even so, brethren, I think it is in our days. At first it seems as if the mighty Teacher were constrained to abide with His disciples by some hard act of faith, some vigorous religious exercise. The opinion is not a delusive one. He who educated the old patriarch to wrestle, educates us of the latest generation in the same method. In proportion as trust and hope are awakened in us, in proportion as we look out of ourselves and seek affiance in the great Deliverer, we rise to a new and better life; we exert the functions of redeemed men. But we may easily persuade ourselves,—no persuasion is so akin to our evil nature, or so difficult to eradicate,—that we choose Him, instead of His choosing us; that our faith alters His purpose, instead of resting upon His purpose. Therefore it may be truly said, that a veil is in our eyes, and that we do not know Him till He comes before us in the fullest sense as the author and giver of all life to us, spiritual or animal.

If you ask whether His breaking of bread in that cottage was a sacramental act, I should answer that I conceive no act of Christ can be anything else. Was it not a pledge of His stooping to men,—of His union with men,—of his dominion over men? But if the question is, whether this breaking of bread was like

that to which we are invited who may communicate in a completed Sacrifice, who may draw nigh to God through an ascended High Priest,—I answer, Christ Himself spoke of His departure to the Father as the beginning of all highest knowledge, as the opening of such a converse between Earth and Heaven as never could be possible whilst He was tarrying with them. It is therefore, I maintain, that we are guilty of strange faithlessness and ingratitude when we estimate our position as worse than that of those who saw Him before the Passion or in the forty days after the Resurrection. It must be better and grander. Christ reveals Himself not to one here and there. He is proclaimed as the Universal King, as the Universal Sacrifice. As such we are permitted to receive Him. As such we are permitted to declare Him to the world.

But if our consciences say, as I am sure they do, "We have not so received Him as such ourselves, we have not declared Him as such to the world;" then let us remember that whatever we have done or have not done, He is now, as of old, revealing Himself. It was not the testimony of women or men that discovered Him to the two disciples as they walked to the village near Jerusalem. That testimony had not availed to disperse the sadness and restore their hopes. It was He Himself who drew near to them and reasoned with them. So has it been always, so is it now. It may diminish some of our pride and

some of our despair if we assure ourselves that it is so. We shall not suppose that we can convert Jews, or Turks, or Infidels, or Heretics by our subtle arguments or wonderful exposures of their ignorance. But if we believe that Christ died, and rose again, for them and for us,—that He is verily the Lord and Teacher of man, we may believe that He knows the passage to their hearts,—that He can tell what is pressing upon them, though we cannot,—that he can meet them and discover Himself to them,—that it is His good pleasure that they as well as we should come to the knowledge of His truth. For what are we, that we should know it? What arts have we by which we can keep Him among us, even if in past days He has tarried with us? Dependence on His infinite grace, on the love which He has manifested to the world, is the only security and comforter to ourselves. While we cherish this dependence and renounce all pretensions to be better than others, He may employ us, as He did the Apostles after they had learnt the same lesson, to be His Messengers to all the families of the earth.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

May 22, 1859.

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1 CORINTHIANS V. 3–6.

"FOR I VERILY, AS ABSENT IN BODY, BUT PRESENT IN SPIRIT, HAVE JUDGED ALREADY, AS THOUGH I WERE PRESENT, CONCERNING HIM THAT HATH SO DONE THIS DEED. IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHEN YE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER, AND MY SPIRIT, WITH THE POWER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, TO DELIVER SUCH AN ONE UNTO SATAN FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FLESH, THAT THE SPIRIT MAY BE SAVED IN THE DAY OF THE LORD JESUS."

HERE we have that awful formula which was supposed to justify all the excommunications of the Middle Ages, and which leads English Churchmen sometimes to complain that the power of excommunication has departed from them. Protestants who cleave affectionately to the name of St. Paul, who have been used to look upon him as the witness against the evils of which they complain, do not like to think that he can have given any warrant for that which sometimes appears to them the greatest of these evils. They try to explain away the words, or to limit them to the times of the Apostle. Neither expedient has availed in the least. Our Conscience rebels against trifling with

any words, most of all with the words which we profess to receive as oracles. Our Conscience asks whether St. Paul was not laying the foundation of a fellowship that was to last for ever, and whether the principles of it can change from generation to generation.

I suspect, brethren, that what we want is a more rigid, not a more loose interpretation of St. Paul's language,—a more fixed determination that we will adhere to it, and not to any comments or glosses upon it. If his meaning had been carefully and honestly extracted from his actual words, the Church would have been warned against her acts of tyranny; if she had taken St. Paul as a guide in her conduct, she would have done more than we can conceive for the moral culture of men, instead of promoting some of their worst immoralities. At all events, let us ask for God's help, that we may be able to do this.

I. You have heard in the Lesson this afternoon why the words were spoken. A crime had been committed by a member of the Church in Corinth, which was odious among heathens. It was notorious: the Apostle had been informed of it. The event must have made some impression on the Corinthian Christians, but, he thought, an impression not adequate to its seriousness. Other topics, about which they had written to him, evidently occupied them more. They were far more busy in deciding on the doctrines of himself and Apollos and Cephas, than in clearing

themselves of this great scandal. St. Paul thought that their solicitude about one subject was a principal cause of their indifference about the other. They were split into parties; naturally they were forgetting what was involved in their common fellowship. While they were debating about the worth of their respective teachers, they were coming more and more to suppose that they had no closer bond than that of allegiance to those teachers. While they were full of their intellectual differences, they did not the least understand how a moral disease, if it began in one limb, might infect their whole body. To teach them what was the right way of dealing with this particular offence, was to throw light on a number of temptations to which they were liable, and on the nature and conditions of their Christian calling.

II. The case alluded to in this chapter at once suggests the thought that the Corinthians had a strong bias to sensuality. All we know of their city conspires with the warnings in St. Paul's epistle to support that opinion. But we should mistake greatly if we supposed that they claimed high privileges for the body, and thought meanly of the soul. We might be sure that, as Greeks, they would exhibit precisely the opposite inclination: we know that they did, from the notions which they formed about the Resurrection. The superiority of the intellect to the animal nature, of the soul to that which was to be ruled by it, no men could feel more strongly. Here was the

excuse for their partisanship. Many thought they had advanced beyond the lessons of St. Paul; they were ripe for the wisdom of Apollos. How attractive, said some, are these Jewish traditions! how delightful, said others, is the deliverance from them! Such feelings indicate considerable activity of mind; they indicate also the want of a sense of a common order, to which all alike belong; they indicate a want of wide human sympathies; they indicate a restlessness which, when it has exhausted itself, is likely enough to find a refuge in fleshly indulgences, as more real than mere speculations of the brain.

III. The Corinthians desired to be spiritual men. They were proud of what they called their spiritual gifts. They rejoiced in the thought that the Spirit of God had awakened in them powers of thought and utterance, which at one time they had not, and which others had not. St. Paul avails himself of this boast. He desires them to be spiritual men. He is thankful for their powers of utterance and his own. He is glad that they come behind in no gifts. But if they wish to be spiritual men, he tells them, they cannot be factious men. The Spirit in man is that which unites one to another. To be divided is to be carnal. The Spirit of God is given to awaken that common spirit in men, to lead it to its true object, to set before it Christ—who gave up Himself, and was crucified—as the Head of the whole Society; to make them partakers of His Mind and Character, to make them

confess His Father as their Father. Owning themselves to be spiritual beings, united in a spiritual fellowship to Christ, they would reverence their bodies. These, instead of being deemed lightly of as prison-houses of the soul, or temporary tabernacles with which they should soon have nothing more to do, would be treated as temples of the Holy Ghost, which they must ask Him to keep from all defilement.

IV. Regarding themselves as spiritual beings, and ruled by God's Spirit, it would be impossible for them not to look upon the evil which assailed them as spiritual. They were tempted to do unrighteous acts; but they were first of all tempted to be unrighteous men. The citadel was invaded. Malice, Pride, Covetousness, Hatred, Impurity, were trying to master them, to get possession of them, to hold them in captivity. Every man was engaged in this battle. None could evade it. Every man must take his side. He must say, 'I submit myself to the Spirit of Good, of Truth, of Charity; I acknowledge myself to be His servant.' Or, 'I invite His enemy to come and reign over me; I promise to do his behests and to work his will.' People might state the case differently, might prefer one nomenclature to another. But somehow or other they must come at last to this issue. Obedience to good or to evil; obedience of the spirit to a spirit of good or evil; this was the alternative. But the Church had already made its choice. Its existence meant that the God of Truth and Charity was

the God; that He had sent His Son into the world to claim men for His children, to endow them with His life. Its existence meant the renunciation of the Devil and of his works. Supposing one of its members had been convicted of one of his works,—not one about which there was any question, but one condemned by the conscience of all mankind,—what was to be done? St. Paul has no doubt. He pronounces his decision clearly and awfully. How does he frame it?

1. He explains what the Society is. "*He is gathered together with them.*" "*Though absent in the body he is with them in spirit.*" These are not random or metaphorical expressions. They are consistent with all that has gone before and all that follows in the Epistle. It is a spiritual body. As spiritual creatures they have entered into it. Conditions of time and space do not circumscribe it. He in Athens, Ephesus, Rome, is still one of them. He cannot separate himself from them. And this is his only security for pronouncing rightly in such a case as this. He could not trust his private judgment in the least. He might be the victim of partial, local, temporary impressions; his individual temperament might make him unjust. His confidence is that the Spirit of Truth will lift him and them above their own haste and vanity, will not allow them to follow their own conceits, will enable them to act as members of a Society of which Christ is the Head.

2. Having that confidence, he decides that *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when they are gathered together and his spirit, they should deliver such a one to Satan.*

I do not wish in the least to mitigate the force of this expression. I do not even at present quote what follows it. Taken as it stands, it seems to me precisely what we should expect from the Apostle, precisely what he must have said, unless he retracted his previous teachings. The man by this act of his has solemnly made his choice. He has said that our Master is not his. He has declared who is his master. To that master we must leave him. We have no right to claim from him the renunciation of a service to which he has devoted himself. We have no right to claim of him a profession which is manifestly false. We owe it to ourselves that we should not. For we are not a set of units thrown together by chance, with no principle of cohesion, with no relations to each other. We affirm ourselves to be a living body, every limb of which is affected by the well or ill doing, the well or ill being of every other. We are a body set in the world to be witnesses of what God would have His world to be, of what it is when it has confessed its true Centre, and moves in its proper orbit.

3. This reason he enforces in the words which follow soon after. "*Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.*" But now he gives another reason. He says that this

was a duty which they owed to the offender himself. "*He was to be delivered to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord.*" We say continually, "What foolish "tenderness you are showing to that man by over- "looking his offences, by suffering him to escape the "consequences of them. Do you not really know "that he must be made to feel his folly, to taste the "wormwood, before there is any hope of his refor- "mation?" The admonition is sound. We all recognize it as sound. It points out how cruel much of our mercy is; what mercy may be at the bottom of severity. The maxim applies to our dealings with children and with wrong-doers. If we are to believe the Prophets, it applies to God's dealings both with men and nations. St. Paul acts upon what he understands to be the divine principle. In fact he does not conceive that it is his own action at all. He has no power to cut off a man from God's Church. The Corinthians have no power. All he or they can do is to ratify what the man has himself done. And this, believing it is the way of defeating the man's madness, and of finally triumphing over his seducer.

There is indeed a breadth and a boldness in the Apostle's speech which we cannot pretend to reach. It is not the part of it which refers to the giving up "*to Satan for the destruction of the flesh*" that confounds us; experience may tell us all too well what that language imports. Not by the act of Churches or Apostles, but by their own act, do we see men given up

to a dark and malignant Spirit, yielding to his suggestions, becoming more and more his instruments. Not by the decrees of Apostles or Churches, but by their own decree, do we see the flesh which they have pampered and brutalized gradually perishing through its own excesses. What we wonder at, what sounds too good to be true, is the hope that is contained in the other clause. To think that even by such tremendous processes the spirit may be brought out of its bondage,—that even in this way the man may be restored and the Tempter defeated; this, notwithstanding all we have dreamed of the infinite storehouse of God's wisdom and lovingkindness, might utterly stagger our feeble faith. The words stand written. St. Paul did not consider them dangerous to utter, even at such a moment, to such a Church, of such a man. I do not suppose we are pious and judicious in being more cautious than he is. I suspect that the more we meditated on the encouragement he holds out, the more we should feel of humiliation and of awe.

V. Here then is the precedent. Would it have been a dangerous one for Churchmen to follow? If men had been taught that Christ has called them to be members of His Body; that He is awakening their spirits by His Spirit to claim their fellowship with Him and with one another; that so far as they yield to that Spirit, God's laws will be written in their hearts, they will be able to follow Him and to resist that which fights against them,—would not this have been

the greatest witness that could have been borne for true, practical, human morality,—the greatest protest that could have been borne against the artificial, exclusive, sacerdotal morality which Churchmen so often have cultivated? If men had been taught that the Devil is not in any sense their master, but that they make him so by distrusting their true, righteous, loving Master, by ceasing to depend upon the help which He promises them every day and hour; that no man may know when they withdraw their allegiance from Him and give it to another, but that God knows, and that God will enable them to know, and will bring them back to Himself; but that if they show openly that they have broken loose from God's law, and accepted the Devil's law, it may be needful to let them understand by bitter trial what that is which they have forsaken, what that is which they have preferred,—would not this be the best witness that the position of men in the Church is not determined by the judgment of any priests, or bishops, or popes; that it is God who places them there and not men? would it not be the greatest protest against the notion that it is right or safe for ecclesiastics to make inquisition into the secret thoughts or opinions of their fellow-men, or to determine anything respecting them except by their conduct? If men were taught how careful the Apostle was not to separate himself from the general body of the Church,—that he was only confident of his own judgment because he felt him-

self one of them, guided by the same Divine Spirit who guided them, would not this be a mighty encouragement to every Christian to hope for the help of that Spirit in hours of doubt and temptation? Would it not be the greatest protest against the arrogance of doctors and priests, who have fancied that they possessed some gifts and faculties, not that they might minister to their fellows, but that they might be raised above them? If men were taught that Excommunication is the slow, solemn, reluctant confirmation of a judgment which the wrong-doer has already passed upon himself, would not this be the greatest witness that Communion is what is meant for human beings, and that to hold forth Communion with God and Communion with men as the privilege which Christ has won for us, is the chief duty of His ministers? Would it not be the most effectual protest against the notion that the power of cursing is the great power of Churches, which those that possess it should eagerly hold fast and exert,—which those should covet who have lost it? If men were taught that St. Paul recommended and inflicted no outward penalty on him whom he desired the Corinthian Church to cut off, that he could inflict none, that the excluded man might, if he pleased, return to heathenism, leave all the perils of a persecuted position, become a persecutor himself,—would not this be the greatest witness for the entirely spiritual nature both of Communion and Excommunication, the greatest witness against those

who have made or would make exclusion a plea for injuries to body or to estate? If men are taught that the worst fear is of their becoming servants of the Spirit of Pride and Malice and Hatred, will not the Excommunicator tremble, lest he should in the worst sense be excommunicating himself? If men are taught that the Prodigal may at last be brought by his riotous living, by eating the swine's husks, to think of his father's house,—that the very end of Excommunication is that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord,—who will not see that its whole purpose has been inverted when it has been used as an instrument for cutting men off from God's forgiveness, for driving them to despair?

VI. But, brethren, it was not only or chiefly for the purpose of commenting upon the misuse of this Excommunication in other days, or in ours, that I have called your thoughts to this subject. I do not think that purpose unimportant, for our feelings about ordinary history and about Scripture are often greatly confused, from our not seeing how far the acts of men that are recorded in one, really correspond to the commands which are found in the other. But I should rejoice far more if I could impress the conviction upon your minds and upon my own, that Excommunication is fearful, because Communion is the real foundation of our lives, because the exercise of it is the reasonable, healthy condition of them. Various opinions and habits that are prevalent among us, make

it very difficult indeed to entertain this faith; yet we do confess it, in a number of our ordinary phrases, to be the true one. We confess that we cannot live without a daily renewal of life. We confess that we cannot separate our life from the life of our kind. Consider earnestly what is involved in that acknowledgment. See whether it does not mean that every faculty of sense, feeling, perception, is awakened in us by an impulse from above; see whether every such faculty does not remind us that we must go out of ourselves if we would be truly ourselves. To be *always* going out of ourselves, *always* in fellowship with the Source of all Good and Truth, *always* communicating what we receive from it to those about us, this is the highest perfection we can dream of; this is the life of Christ; this must be the life of those spirits who have fought the fight, and finished their earthly course. To be receiving nothing, to be communicating nothing, to be altogether shut up in self, this is that Excommunication which we can hardly dream of; this must be the condition of devils.

We stand between the two. At every moment something reminds us that we may sink into the worst. At every moment there is a voice beckoning us upwards to the nobler. Let each of us understand that that is the Voice of Christ, saying to him, "In thyself lie the capacities of an ever-deepening Death; I have come that thou mayest have Life, and mayest have it every day more abundantly."

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

May 29, 1859.

ROMANS X. 6–9.

"BUT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF FAITH SPEAKETH ON THIS WISE, SAY NOT IN THINE HEART, WHO SHALL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN? (THAT IS, TO BRING CHRIST DOWN FROM ABOVE:) OR, WHO SHALL DESCEND INTO THE DEEP? (THAT IS, TO BRING UP CHRIST AGAIN FROM THE DEAD). BUT WHAT SAITH IT? THE WORD IS NIGH THEE, EVEN IN THY MOUTH: THAT IS, THE WORD OF FAITH, WHICH WE PREACH; THAT IF THOU SHALT CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH THE LORD JESUS, AND SHALT BELIEVE IN THINE HEART THAT GOD HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, THOU SHALT BE SAVED."

ST. PAUL is here, as elsewhere in this Epistle, contrasting the righteousness of the law, the righteousness which consists in mere acts, with the righteousness of faith,—that which concerns a man's being,—that which he acquires by trusting in a righteous God. Some, no doubt, of his readers, Jews as well as Gentiles, would suppose that by this contrast he was setting aside the lessons of Moses; or, at all events, that he was treating them as if they belonged to an earlier time, and had been made obsolete by the Gospel. There was no real warrant for such an opinion in any

part of his letter. Everywhere he had appealed to the Old Testament and the lives of its heroes, as examples of that righteousness which was not legal but personal. If David and the Psalmists were not contradicting the old Lawgiver, St. Paul was not contradicting him. But here he adduces the authority of the Lawgiver himself. He quotes first a passage from the book of Leviticus, which describes, in clear, distinct terms, the legal righteousness, 'the man which doeth these things shall live by them.' He then takes a passage from the book of Deuteronomy, which describes, he says, as clearly, the righteousness of faith. Thereby he shows that he is not setting up the wisdom of one period against the wisdom of another, but is asserting principles which are immutable, which belong to the constitution of man. In no time could a law of letters, written and graven in stones, be the ground of righteousness for a human being. In all times a law of letters might be of immense value in defining what acts ought not to be done. At no time could trust in an actual living person be merged in obedience to formal rules. At all times the trust must be the root and principle of an obedience. Moses had proclaimed this distinction and this doctrine in his day, as St. Paul was to proclaim them in his own. If they were true, all the intermediate history of the world would have thrown light upon them. If St. Paul's message to mankind was true,—if his Gospel was not a delusion,—it would

not set at nought, but unfold, the lessons of the old world.

I. The words in the book of Deuteronomy are these:—"*For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.*"

St. Paul does not quote these words exactly. He gives what he believes to be the inner sense of them. Moses here, as throughout the book, was comparing the word which had been proclaimed to the Israelites by an unseen God with the worship of visible things to which men are naturally prone. Now the impulse to this worship may be described generally thus. It is a craving to find out what is in the heaven over us, or in the depth beneath. Men look up to the sun, moon, and stars. They are exercising some kind of rule over us. What kind of rule? The Sun looks down upon the earth and sees the deeds that are done upon it. Is he a judge? Does he take account of those deeds? Blessings come from his light. He scorches and consumes as well as illuminates. Are these tokens of his good or ill will? The Night—that too must exercise a sovereignty. It seemed a calmer,

steadier government than that of the day, with all its changeable aspects. Fearful crimes must be revealed to the eyes which look out of those clear stars. The sage might dismiss these imaginations, but he could not dismiss the belief that the powers in the heavens were in marvellous ways affecting the earth. Beneath the mere forms which came forth by day or night, he perceived a Light which must have been earlier than they. And if a Light, was there not also a Darkness? Had they struggled together for ever? Which was first? Were they to be rivals for ever? Which would survive the other? Who would ascend into heaven that he might find an answer to these questions?

But again. The sun coming forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, the moon walking in her brightness, would not speak more to human hearts than the unfathomable deep. How is it that the first sight of the sea impresses us? What impression has it left on the mind of the world? Before man has learnt to traverse it with his ships, the sense of illimitable depth, more even than of illimitable vastness, overpowers him. Is that the grave into which all things are at last to descend? Has it not something to do with the grave into which each of us must descend? Is death the end of the Universe as well as of us? Who will go down into the deep and tell us?

Moses knew assuredly that there would be this craving in all hearts for tidings from above and from beneath. He was sure that the craving would not be

checked by any disappointments. For God Himself had set these heavens over their heads; God had surrounded them with these waters. The message which they brought to men was His message. And how then might the eagerness of men to question heaven above and the deep below for answers to their doubts, be stayed? Lo! the word is nigh thee, in thy heart and in thy mouth, that thou mayest do it.

The Ruler thou art seeking in the skies is close to thyself. Thou hast thought He was looking down upon thee out of the sun, because His light was penetrating into thy heart and showing thee the secrets of it. He commands the sun, but first of all He commands thee. His word has fixed the bounds of the deep, but first of all he has fixed what thou shouldst be, and what thou shouldst do. He is Creator of these things. He is thy Lord, thy Deliverer, thy Friend. Trust Him, and the heavens above will look bright and clear to thee. Trust Him, and the deep will not be terrible to thee. Thou mayest walk joyfully in the light of the day, for it testifies of Him who is ordering thy steps. Thou mayest traverse the deep fearlessly, for He will be with thee.

This was the way, the only way, by which the old Lawgiver could check the restless search in his people after news from the world above and the world beneath,—could check the idolatry of upper and nether gods, which in all other countries was the result and expression of that restlessness. Just so far as they

heeded his exhortation, and acted upon it, just so far could they walk calmly and cheerfully along life's common road, pondering their steps, not distracted by vague threats or promises—doing the thing which was given them to do—resisting the temptations to distrust which beset them every moment—rejoicing in every glimpse of light which they had, earnest for more. These were the brave, true fighters, whom we find holding fast their faith, confessing their sins, uttering their complainings and hopes in the book of Psalms. These are the prophets, to whom the word of God came, and who testified of that word of God to the kings, priests, prophets, people,—who told them how they were forgetting the Lord, following their own delusions, fearing where no fear was, deceiving themselves with dreams that could have no issue. For these kings and priests and prophets and people, not believing that there was a word nigh them, even in their hearts, not trembling before that word as if it were God's, turned to all vain things that could not profit, to the delusions and abominations of the nations round about them. One while they would be occupied with their gold and silver, their chariots and horses, would affirm that there was nothing real but these. Then in hours of trouble and anguish their hearts would be moved as the trees are moved by the wind. They would be afraid to ask of God the signs and tokens that His promises would be fulfilled; but they would consult wizards that peep and

mutter; they would ask in wild dismay, "Who will go for us into the heights; who will go down for us into the deep?" The human anxieties which they had in vain tried to repress by the aid of a sensual life and a religion of distrust and fear, would burst forth in all their violence. But there would be no answer to them. The firmament over them would seem to be brass. None could break through its impassive, unsympathizing sternness; yet all might be the victims of its caprices. The ground below would utter low murmurings. None could interpret them; but it might open in a moment, and all the pomp and glory of the earth descend into it.

II. Fourteen hundred years had passed away since Moses spoke that sentence. St. Paul was writing, in a character unknown to his fathers, to the inhabitants of a city in a different continent from theirs—a city which did not begin to exist till centuries after the Jewish lawgiver had left the world—a city which appeared to have crushed all the hopes of freedom and dominion which that Lawgiver had taught his countrymen to cherish—a city which looked upon Palestine as one of the least of the trophies that showed it to be the predestined Queen of the Nations. Who can reckon up the changes which had taken place in those years, the empires which had risen and fallen, the dreams which had been cherished and scattered? What had *not* changed? The sun and moon and stars looked down as of old upon men. They suggested

thoughts to them still of a fixed rule and order. The same questions had been stirring during all that time —stirring far more actively than in former days— about the nature of that rule. Astrologers had tried to discover it; mythologies had been built up for the explanation of it. Philosophers had confuted those mythologies. Men had had enough disappointments to make them despair of any solution. And yet they could not despair. Amidst all the weariness and unbelief of St. Paul's time,—while such numbers were repeating Pilate's question, "What is truth?" with more than his listlessness and scorn—the cry might be heard on every side, "Who will go for us into heaven? Who will tell us about these dynasts, who are exercising some strange control over our destinies?"

The sea had been the scene of many a fight; it had become the minister of man's wants and pleasures. Yet it had not lost its terrors. It still hinted at an abyss in which all things might sink and be lost. It still associated itself with the thoughts of that grave into which every ruler of the earth had to pass. Only, as St. Paul intimates by the changes he introduces into the language of Moses, it was rather Death itself in its grim, naked form that was presenting itself to each man, than mere general symbols of it. What is he? Is he the great King of all kings? Why do we fight him to the last? Why do we not quietly yield to his supremacy, since he has established it by the evidence of centuries? Why this clinging to life?

Why this dream of immortality? Why this horror of it? Who will go down into the deep, and bring us back some tidings, that we may know?

The countrymen of Moses were not really less tormented by these questions than the heathens. They spoke learned words about a heaven above the visible heaven; about a second and third heaven. They had much lore also about the grave and the resurrection that might follow it. But, practically, they thought of God as a distant Being, seated somewhere in the sky or above the sky, just as the worshipers of the Olympian Jove did. Practically their speculations about the nether world were not less confused—were in many respects darker—than those of the nations which assigned it to Pluto. And why? Because they had forgotten the lesson of Moses. They knew they ought to keep the law, but they did not ask themselves how they should acquire the righteous mind which would enable them to keep the law. They did not believe that there was a word near them, speaking to them in their hearts. They did not believe that that word came from the mouth of God. If they had, they would have asked Him to teach them of the heaven above and the deep beneath. They would have been sure that He knew the secrets of both. They would not have doubted that the questionings which had been awakened in His creatures respecting them were to have a solution—a more complete solution than they could dream of.

Here then is the meaning of those explanations with which St. Paul interpolates the passage he borrowed from Moses. "*Who shall ascend into Heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ again from the dead.)*" He intimates that the craving to go up into heaven and down into the deep, could not be effectually quelled in the nations of the earth, that it must go on producing ever fresh restlessness, ever fresh superstitions, unless it could be declared that One had sounded the deep; had entered death and the grave and hell; had ascended into heaven. He intimates that those who had been learning the lesson of Moses, who had been heeding the word that spoke to them in their hearts, had been trying to obey it, would be ready to welcome the news that the problem which had been haunting all human beings was solved for all human beings; that the mysteries of the nether world had been penetrated; that He who had descended into the lower parts of the earth, had ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. But above all, he says to the Roman Christians who had received these tidings, who had confessed that the Crucified Lord was the Head of all Principalities and Powers, and of every name that is named, 'Let there be no fever and restlessness in you. Do not you be asking for any to ascend into heaven, or to descend into the deep. That is to disbelieve that Christ has actually conquered death and hell; that is to disbe-

lieve that He has actually united our nature to God's nature; that He has actually glorified our nature at God's right-hand. Your business is to trust the risen Lord with your secret hearts; to be believing in His perfect righteousness, and by faith to be clothing yourselves with His nature. Your business is to be fighting, as your forefathers fought, against all the temptations to distrust, cowardice, baseness, which are besetting you on every side. Your business is to be desiring that all should be known that can be known about the heaven above or the deep beneath, because nothing can be known that will not be a greater revelation of the goodness and truth of your Father in heaven, and of the glory to which He has called us by His Son. By simplest acts of daily obedience, by continual efforts to be true, to speak truth, to follow truth, you are to prove that Christ's word is speaking to you, speaking in you; you are to show forth His risen life. But you are to confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, as well as to believe in Him with your heart. For He has not died and ascended on high for you, but for mankind. He has not led your captivity captive, but the captivity of your race. He does not reign over you, nor even over your nation or your Church, but over all Powers in heaven and earth. Therefore you are to confess and proclaim to the inhabitants of the earth, not your religion, but Him who died and revived and went to His Father, that He might draw all to Himself. You are to think that

every man who, amidst whatever confusion, is striving to be faithful and righteous, is obeying a word speaking in his heart—and because that is God's word and not man's, will be led by Him into all truth. You are not to doubt that through all cloudy and dark ways, by wars and revolutions, by judgments upon kingdoms and churches, God is leading to, and will accomplish His great victory, will throw down all images and notions of ours about things in the heaven above or in the deep, which have hidden His righteousness from men, will manifest Him who has died and risen and ascended, as the one perfect image of that righteousness to His Universe.'

Sunday after Ascension.

June 5, 1859.

EPHESIANS III. 15.

"OF WHOM THE WHOLE FAMILY IN HEAVEN AND EARTH IS NAMED."

THE Ascension of our Lord is little thought of by many who seem to derive much comfort from dwelling on His death and His resurrection. 'These facts,' they say, 'connect themselves with all that we 'are suffering ourselves and see our friends suffer. 'They meet the anguish of our individual con-'sciences; they are suggested to us by the open 'grave, and the mourners who go about our streets; 'they come within the region of ordinary experience. 'The Ascension may be a fit subject for those who 'dream dreams and see visions to meditate upon. 'Often we long for a few hours of cloister life; then 'perhaps our spirits would sometimes find wings and 'mount up as eagles towards the sun. But we are 'in the midst of bustle and distraction, of ignomi-'nious occupations, of daily duties. We must per-'force dwell amongst these. Should not we recon-'cile ourselves to our lot? Should not we keep our

'souls low, not exercising ourselves in great matters 'which are too high for us? Is not this a part of 'the humility which is enjoined upon us, and which 'it is difficult enough to preserve, even with all our 'caution?'

It is indeed most difficult to preserve humility with this caution. I should be rather inclined to say it is impossible. I find that David, who desired a humble and a contrite heart, as much as any man, took precisely the opposite way of seeking for that inestimable gift. "*Lord,*" he says, "*who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? who shall rest upon Thy holy hill? He that sitteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes.*" Instead of putting the two thoughts in direct contrast with each other, he brings them together. Instead of instructing us that the habit of mind which leads us to climb the hill of the Lord, and the habit of cherishing high thoughts of ourselves, are of the same kind, he assumes that one must destroy the other: he who aspires to that height must think meanly of himself. If we had only the Psalmist's authority to lead us to this conclusion, we might be satisfied; but I suspect we shall find all our own experience confirming it. Did you ever meet a man without any lofty aspirations who was lowly in his own eyes? What is there to make him so? He measures himself by the standard of people around him. If any rise above his own level, he can discover some flaw in them which restores his self-compla-

cency: he does all that he thinks it necessary to do: he is all that he wants to be. This is not what we commonly understand by humility. But at least we may suppose that commonplace earthly morality will look very contemptible in the eyes of these aspiring men. I sought on a former occasion to ascertain if this is so, from the Psalm which I have just quoted. What did it tell us? The qualities which it attributes to the man who ascends into the hill of the Lord are precisely those which we demand of the ordinary English gentleman—of the ordinary English tradesman. There is no deceit in his heart. He speaks the truth. He does not slander his neighbour. He does not injure his neighbour. The Psalm which tells most of entering into communion with the Lord, and of seeing His face, dwells on such habits as these, and only on such.

Perhaps this language belongs to the Old Testament. Perhaps when we pass into the region of the better Covenant, of the fuller realities, we shall find an entire change. The commonplace morality will be cast aside. We shall have the true saintly ideal. Let us turn to the Epistle from which my text is taken. It is, as I have described it to you before, peculiarly and emphatically the Epistle concerning our Lord's Ascension. All the most powerful passages which were adopted into our Services last Thursday were drawn from it: those respecting Christ's leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men, are the

fairest possible samples of the whole letter, revealing its purpose and its inmost spirit. It opens with a marvellous thanksgiving to God for having blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ. It speaks of the purpose of God to gather up all things in the heavens and in the earth in Christ. It unites the prayer that the Ephesians may have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation granted them, with the power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him upon His own right-hand in heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in the world to come. These examples may illustrate the kind of inspiration which there was in the heart of the Apostle when he was writing this letter. You will say at once it is a strain of unusual elevation. He is in a rarefied atmosphere; on mountain-tops, where breathing is difficult; clouds at his feet; the common plain of earth very far below indeed. Well, now then we may inquire what is that new and celestial morality which is to displace all that has to do with the common dwellings and affairs of men. "*Therefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.*" "*Be ye angry and sin not.*" "*Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*" "*Let bitterness, and wrath, and cla-*

mour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice." "*Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.*" "*Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.*" "*Husbands, love your wives.*" "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for that is right.*" "*Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.*" "*Servants, obey your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ.*" "*Masters, do the same thing unto them, forbearing threatening.*" These sentences are taken from the Epistle, just as the others were, almost at hazard. They lie on the surface of it. They express the very spirit of it. And the more you read it, the more you feel that St. Paul never thought of the precepts, which belong to the ordinary business of earth, as standing aloof from the revelations of the divine world, or as merely added on to them. He supposed that the Ephesians ought to know that they were sitting with Christ in heavenly places, in order that they might not lie, or allow filthy communications to proceed out of their mouths. He did not suppose that it was unnecessary to tell those for whom he asked that they might know the greatness of their calling, and the unsearchable riches of Christ, that they should not deceive, nor slander their neighbour, nor be thieves, nor adulterers. If the saints in Ephesus considered it an insult to hear those plain broad exhortations,—if they supposed they had no occasion for them, and craved for something more suitable to their safe and elevated condition,—

they must go to some other teacher than St. Paul. That was what he considered good and healthful for them. From him they would get no more palatable food.

I think, then, we need not discuss further the question which was asked, whether we require the seclusion of a convent, that we may be fit to enter into the mystery of Christ's Ascension. If St. Paul's way of considering the subject is the true one,—if we have not discovered some other that is wiser and better,—it is in the midst of moral corruption and evil,—of such a merchant city as Ephesus was, as London is,—with every temptation assailing us which assails other men,—that we may expect to find the necessity for this faith, and that we may, if we will, enter into the full possession and blessing of it. The streets and alleys of a great town, with their swarming population — the crimes, neglects, pettinesses, heartlessness, in high places and in low—the evils whence all these are derived, which are laid bare in our own hearts,—these, even these may be the schoolmasters to bring us to Christ; not to Him only who has descended that He might be a fellow-heir of human miseries, that He might bear human sins, but to Him who has ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. If it is asked how this can be, I answer, 'Because it is all but impossible for me not to be crushed under that awful and intolerable load of life and death,—under the appalling sense of the physical wretchedness and the moral debasement

of one or two of the creatures I might single out of that mass, even if it was not multiplied by tens of millions, even if each evil, instead of standing solitary and self-concentrated, did not add its infection to every other, and deepen it and propagate it; it would be nearly impossible to sustain the recollection that the cancer of Society is not to be found only where it is visible to every eye, but is dwelling there where it is carefully covered over, and where the outward appearance is most comely; it would be quite impossible to bear the most partial discovery of that which is always naked and open to the Father of Lights; if we were not permitted, encouraged, commanded to believe that the very nature which we see, which we feel, to be capable of such infinite degradation, has been taken, redeemed, justified, glorified by the Son of Man; and that in it, in that very nature, divested of not one of its essential properties, wanting in no spiritual or intellectual or bodily attribute, full, perfect, human, does He stand at the right-hand of God, our representative and High Priest.'

Brethren, we ask what evidence there is for this great and amazing assertion, which no experience can vouch for, which seems to set sense and all the arguments from sense at defiance. And I am sure we get no answer to the question till those facts which are passing before us and within us become the evidence. They are not in themselves luminous: they form a dark thunder-cloud; and the flashes that come out

of it blind oftener than they enlighten. But you cannot and dare not believe that this is all, that nothing is behind it. And if anything, what? If there is any order and beauty and harmony beneath these horrible discords, where would you look for it? In a thing or in a Person? In light which you have created, or in a light of which all your brightest creations are but some streaks and scattered rays? In a hero that you have glorified, or in the Son of God who was before all worlds, who humbled Himself and became of no reputation, and whom His Father has glorified?

A faith which boasts that it rests upon the Death and Resurrection of Christ, without taking any account of His Ascension, may serve very well as long as our thoughts are occupied chiefly with the condition of our own souls and with the question how they may be saved here and hereafter. The death of Christ presents itself to the awakened conscience of a man as an assurance of divinest peace. Afterwards, when the conflict is stilled and the mind has relapsed into its ordinary condition, reasons are offered him why he has a right to this peace; we try to explain how Christ's death has procured it. With these he would not have been satisfied before, when he wanted a message from God, not arguments of men. Now they serve to content his understanding, and to keep up in him relics of a religious feeling. The news of the Resurrection of Christ is to the actual mourner

as a voice from behind the veil, saying, "O Grave, where is thy victory?" The keen grief is over; the business of this world is resumed; then he learns how the Resurrection of Christ proves that he and his friends are sometime or other to rise. He accepts the arguments which in his hour of misery would have been of no worth at all; declares that they convince him; and forgets them. But when we are brought to feel, by one discipline or another, that we are bound up for good and for evil with our race; that we are not, and cannot be exempt from any of its transgressions; that with it we must sink or swim; there comes a demand for something more than the gift of pardon, than the promise of a better world if we should be worthy of it. We can make out no special case for ourselves; there are no circumstances in our lives which entitle us to ask for exemptions and mitigations when our evil deeds are brought into judgment, far less which can make us dream of rewards. If man is doomed, you and I are doomed; if there is anywhere a salvation for man, that is for us. When we are brought to this pass, to this border-land between absolute despair and a hope that is beyond all we can ask or think, the Ascension-day breaks in upon us as with the light of seven suns. He has gone up on high. He is there where our eyes cannot follow Him, with the God who is and was and is to come, His Father and our Father. He is there, not separated by space from the creatures

whose nature He bears; not separated from them in any sympathy; in all things what He was, when He bore their infirmities, was made sin for them, died their death. And that which constitutes His perfect Humanity, His Truth, His Justice, His Purity, His Sympathy—this is our inheritance, this is the new and glorious clothing which He has provided for us if we will put it on; which we *do* put on when we remember that it is His for us; which we *do* put on when we give up high conceits of ourselves, and have no wish to be unlike our brethren, but are certain that all things are theirs, whether Life or Death, or things present or things to come, because they are Christ's and Christ is God's.

And thus we understand how St. Paul drops so easily from the heaven of heavens into that vulgar morality about lying, thieving, corrupt communications, the obedience of children, the reverence of parents, the mutual fidelity of masters and servants. Very vulgar indeed it is to talk against lying. And yet, in all these thousands of years, what have legislators, philosophers, religious men done by decrees, calculations, terrors of the future, to extinguish lying, even to abate it? Have they not, each in their own ways, indorsed and sanctioned different lies and systems of lies, the inward lies of self-flattery, the deep and devilish lies which put on the form of piety which are circulated and enforced for the sake of the soul, which are the most complicated, and which

propagate most rapidly of all? A deliverance from lies—lies in their simplest, most natural shape—lies in their inward essence,—surely this would be the great deliverance for us all. And I do not think we shall obtain that deliverance, Brethren,—that Society will be brave, truthful,—that we, the members of Society, shall be so, till we take St. Paul's words in their full, broad sense; "*Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.*" There is the secret. We do not believe that we are members one of another. We do not believe that there is one living and true Head of us all. We do not think that He feels for us all, and cares for us, and knows our secrets, and wishes us to be true in our inward parts, and is Himself the Truth. We do not believe this in our hearts, however we may cant about it with our lips. And therefore, under one pretext or another,—sometimes because a man wishes to deceive us and so we may deceive him; sometimes because men must be cheated for their own interest; sometimes because faith is not to be kept with heretics and enemies of God;—we claim a right to hug our darling falsehoods, to circulate them; to live in them, till all communion with the God of Heaven, and therefore with men upon earth, becomes impossible.

If this, the greatest and most radical of all vices,—the vice of the beggar and of the possessor of millions, of him who sells votes and of him who buys them,

of the Statesman and the Churchman,—may be extirpated by faith in One Who ascended on high, and united us all to God and to each other, why should we doubt that this also is the most effectual remedy for these crimes which are the temptations of one class and not of another, and which Society agrees to punish? It is not a question any longer whether this is so or not. We have condemned the thief, as we were bound to do, whatever may be his motives to the act, whatever may be the apologies for him in the ignorance and debasement in which we have suffered him to grow up. The awe which these punishments awaken—if they are evenly administered, if they are not excessive, or aimed at one description of wrong-doers more than another, or measured out to meet a popular opinion—is good for us all; it strengthens us in the belief of an infallible Judge, of a Righteousness which must expose evil and expel it. But you will not impress even that conviction upon the thief—you certainly will not make him a good citizen—unless you appeal to something else in him than the dread of vengeance. He will not perceive that he was wrong unless you show him a standard of right, unless you tell him that the standard is his, and that he may attain it. If you promise that Society will forgive and forget his offences, you deceive him; he finds out continually that it is not so. If you assure him that there is a pleasure in right acts which does not accompany wrong acts, you may speak your own

experience. There are moments when it will be his experience. But there are other moments when he will feel a keen delight in defying the principles which his conscience recognizes, when not to defy them will cost him intense effort and agony. Remembering these, he will suspect that you have been practising a pious fraud upon him. The Spirit that he has obeyed will whisper to him that there are charms in his service, of which these monitors with their wise saws and modern instances know nothing. Too often he will return to the house that is swept and garnished, with other spirits worse than himself. But if you can tell the man that he may recover his rights as a member of Society, even though Society should never recognize his rights,—if you can tell him that he may have a pure, clear conscience, though he feels ever so much hankering after evil; that he may resist the evil Spirit, though he brings ever so many arguments, fresh or old, to tempt him down, arguments which bystanders do not not know the force of,—then indeed you have helped to make him a new creature in the sight of his fellows, a new creature in all his dealings with them and purposes towards them. And this you do, when you tell him that there is a divine righteousness which dwells in Christ for him and for us, a Righteousness which He declared to be meant for all, when He ascended to the right-hand of God.

The same principle applies to the relations of husband and wife, father and child, master and servant.

You cannot make these relations right by penalties. Penal Law takes no notice of them till they become disorganized and intolerable. How are you to preserve them from sinking into that condition? All the health of Society depends upon their health. What diet have you to ward off sickliness from them, what medicines to cure it? When you have tried other methods, you will be driven to this. You will have to own that these relations are constituted in Christ the Head of mankind; that He maintains their cause; that our selfishness is fighting a deadly battle against them; that they must perish utterly, if selfishness is omnipotent; that they can be quickened into a new life, if we believe that One has ascended on high, Who has led captive our captivity to selfishness and to every other tyrant.

When we thus think of the Ascension, we do not lose for an instant our interest in the Death and Resurrection of our Lord. We recover that meaning which they had for us when we received them first as children, or when they brought to us in our guilty manhood tidings of a Father who had blotted out our sins and justified us. The speculations in which we have been occupied since, about the mode in which Christ's death has operated for our salvation, about the limits beyond which the blessings of His Resurrection cannot extend, have become wearisome and hopeless to us. We leave them for leisurely people who are engaged in no conflict for life. We are content

to receive the message of Redemption by the Cross, of Christ's victory over the grave, as He and His Apostles delivered it. The Cross becomes far more than ever the sign in which, and in which alone, we hope to conquer, when we have acknowledged the Lamb in the midst of the Throne, the object of all love and worship to the powers in heaven as well as in earth. The Resurrection becomes far more than ever the strength to the dying man, the strength as we commit each brother to the ground, when the voice rings through all creation, "*I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold, I live for evermore, and have the keys of death and of hell.*" The individual sufferers in the family on earth never know what has been done for them, till they count themselves part of the family in heaven.

This last remark brings me to the words of my text. I have not spoken of it yet, because the force of it, I think, is only appreciated when we have considered the purpose of the Epistle in which it occurs. The very essence of that Epistle is concentrated in the prayer which these words introduce. About the words themselves, "*Of whom the whole family in Heaven and Earth is named,*" there is some doubt. According to the reading which we have adopted, "*Jesus Christ our Lord*" is the antecedent. These words are omitted in several MSS. which recent editors pronounce to be most trustworthy. There is some internal evidence in favour of the omission; for the word πατριὰ,

which St. Paul uses only on this occasion, will then at once be connected with *Πατὴρ*, and a new emphasis will be given to the name. And since *ἐξ οὗ*, and not *ἐν ᾧ*, is used at the beginning of the sentence, it has a more direct application to the Father than to Christ. There is no need to struggle for the common reading, because it contains a witness for Christ as the Elder Brother of the Family. The whole Epistle witnesses for that. The name of Father, your Father and my Father, implies it. But the belief of a Universal Patriarchate in heaven and earth is the very one which vindicates all earthly relations as divine, and the one which destroys the notion of a Universal Patriarch on earth claiming the power of Heaven as his. Against that notion our ancestors testified, on behalf of their own consciences and of their national freedom. Neither protest can be prized too dearly. But upon us has descended the duty of bearing it in a still larger interest, for a wider circle. When we understand what our controversy is, all paltry special pleading, all arguments by which rival religionists establish their own wisdom and their opponents' folly will be cast aside with contempt. Our cause is the cause of Romanists as much as of Protestants. We shall be declaring that there is a Society broad enough for every kindred and tongue, a Society which excludes none, who do not exclude themselves because they deny that there is a pure and redeemed and glorious Humanity with which all may be invested, who cast away the filthy

garments of their own vanity and selfishness; a Society in which those that have fought the good fight and washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, who are ever before God, who go no more out of His Temple, are united with those that are fighting hard here with the world and the flesh and the Devil; a Society in which the worst and the best, the sinner that has most ado to keep himself from utter shipwreck, and the saint in glory, require and receive the same food, the food of His flesh Who was given for the life of the world—of His flesh Who is ever living for us at the right-hand of His Father.

Whit-Sunday.

June 12, 1859.

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2 Timothy i. 7.

"FOR GOD HATH NOT GIVEN US THE SPIRIT OF FEAR; BUT OF POWER, AND OF LOVE, AND OF A SOUND MIND."

Many readers of this passage, I doubt not, place the emphasis on the word *us*. They suppose St. Paul to say, 'An ordinary man, who occupied the position 'which you occupy, the overseer of a society which is 'composed of various and contradictory elements, in 'which strange doctrines are appearing, which is ex- 'posed to all the influences of a commercial and cor- 'rupt city, would fear and tremble. Oftentimes he 'would be assailed by cowardly thoughts of what this 'or that man would say of him; oftentimes he would 'be crushed with the sense of an overwhelming re- 'sponsibility; oftentimes he would be anticipating fu- 'ture calamities. But it is not so with you or with 'me. Young as you are, God has put you beyond the 'reach of such temptations, by the peculiar gift with 'which He has endowed you. It is your privilege to 'be as free from fightings and terrors as I, your spi- 'ritual father, am.'

It is very natural that those who regard the blessing which Whit-Sunday commemorates as one that was peculiar to the apostolical age, should adopt this interpretation of the text; they cannot well tolerate any other. But I think it is at variance with the direct language, as well as with the pervading tone, of these pastoral letters, and of all St. Paul's letters to the Churches. Timothy, one would gather from the words which are addressed to him, felt keenly and oppressively the greatness of the task that had been imposed upon him, often shrank from the weight of it, was not less conscious than any teacher or ruler in any age has been, of inexperience and feebleness. No privilege which had been conferred on him, saved him from the sense of fear, or from that bondage which fear produces. If he had such an exemption, he was wholly unlike his teacher and guide. That teacher was often so beaten down by fears within as well as fightings without, as to despair even of life. He had, he said, the sentence of death in him, and there were times when the sentence appeared on the point of executing itself.

What encouragement, then, could he give to Timothy? Precisely that which he had found necessary in his own case, precisely that to which he had been driven by the experience he has described to us. *His* spirit might be palsied with fear; but there was a Spirit near him and with him which was not a Spirit of fear, to which he could turn as the Deliverer from

fear, the Restorer of energy, the Quickener of hope. That Spirit had been given, not to him, Paul, but to the Family of which he was a member;—if in any especial sense to him, to him only because he was a servant of that Family, because he needed powers that were not his own, to make his ministries for it effectual. All his comfort lay in the assurance that this Spirit was God's Spirit; not bound by the limitations or swayed by the fluctuations of those whom He governed; able at the same moment to control, renovate, emancipate, myriads of human wills, as the sun acts at the same moment on myriads of vegetable or animal existences, in all stages of their growth or their decay. The Apostle, believing as he did that the day of Pentecost spoke of a real, not of an imaginary gift,—of a living Person, not of a floating influence,—of that which was the last, highest, most permanent of God's blessings to His creatures,—of that which was implied in the creation and constitution of Man, but which could not be actually conferred, in its fullness and universality, till Christ had glorified the nature of Man at the right-hand of his Father;—the Apostle, believing this, could bid Timothy remember in his darkest hours—it was the only remembrance which was of the least avail to himself—that they had been baptized with the Spirit, not of fear, but of Power, of Love, of a Sound Mind.

Assuredly, my brethren, this faith of the Apostle's would have failed him altogether,—it could have been

no refuge to him in those battles with principalities and powers which he found so much more terrible than all battles with flesh and blood,—if he had supposed that we of after-days would not have the same right to exercise it as he had. He lived to bear witness that when Christ "*had ascended on high, He received gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them.*"

That witness was either false for his own time, or it is true for us, and for our children, and for as many as the Lord our God shall call. Whitsuntide has declared to generations of men, of all nations and families and tongues, that the message was for them. Let us see then what lessons of strength, of consolation, of warning, each one here may gather from the words that were first written for Timothy.

I. I suppose we have all felt tempted, at times, to use language which is just the reverse of the Apostle's. We have read in records of the past,—we have known on a larger or smaller scale among our contemporaries,—such instances of strange panic and cowardice, of counsel and heart failing just when the need for them was the greatest, that we have been ready to exclaim, 'Surely there is something Divine 'in this! We cannot attribute such a loss of nerve 'and energy to the pressure of outward circumstances; 'these often evoke the greatest courage when they are 'most appalling. We cannot attribute it merely to a 'natural want of courage; those same men, or bodies

'of men, at other crises, showed that they were ca-
'pable of manly effort. Their fear is surely superna-
'tural. God has given them this spirit of Fear.'
Such a mode of speaking is not uncommon; it is not without strong excuse. Many awful sentences of Scripture might be alleged in support of it. I think these sentences find an echo in our own consciences.

But I think also, brethren, that our consciences will tell us that we pervert such passages of Scripture, if we set them in opposition to the doctrine of St. Paul in the one now before us. We need not study the records of the past, or the actions of our fellow-men, to learn what the spirit of fear or cowardice is. Each one knows the gripe of it in himself. Each one has trembled before the opinion of Society, or of that little fraction of Society with which he has to do, or of some particular man. Each has, perhaps, known something of that cowardice which springs from self-distrust, from the apprehension of lions in his path, from doubtfulness, which of several paths he should choose, from the foretaste of coming evils. If only some (how many would be included in that some!) shrink at the thought of certain acts being exposed which they would desire that none should ever know but themselves, is there one of us who has not been made conscious of tempers, habits, states of mind, which he has longed to conceal from the eye of that Judge to Whom he is sure they must be most hateful?

Now every one of these fears has not only an apparent but a real justification. It is exceedingly likely that the verdict of the individual or the public which we dread will be given against us; the sense of feebleness is no delusion; the actual sorrow often surpasses our dream of it; the bad act has been done, and will some day be discovered; the man lies to himself if he says, 'I have not been as unkind, as 'base, as insincere as my heart witnesses that I have 'been; that unkindness, baseness, insincerity, are not 'as much at war with the nature of a pure, loving, 'true God, as I supposed that they were.' And yet this fear which is reasonable takes away my reason; it makes me false and slavish. Why? Because I am not obeying the perfect reason; my will is out of harmony with the free and just will. I am afraid of things which have no right over me, but which claim a right over me when I have broken loose from my lawful allegiance. The old Scriptures may well represent God as giving men over to their fear; as leaving them to feel what they are without Him; what they must become if He were not upholding them. But such a statement is surely in strict consistency with the fuller and more perfect one of the Apostle, that the Spirit of Fear is not God's Spirit, —not the Spirit which He gives,—that that is the Spirit against which we are revolting when the other gets the mastery of us; that only by recollecting the presence—the continual presence—of a Spirit of

Power and Love and of a Sound Mind, can we shake off its tyranny, and recover the dignity of men.

II. The Spirit of God is said to be a Spirit of *Power*. Consider the different kinds of Power before which men bow, and those which they covet most to exercise. There is none more familiar or more wonderful than that of the *Orator*. It is felt in the most savage tribes and the most civilized; you are doubtful whether the North-American Indian, or the Greek in the age of Pericles or Philip, illustrates it most. It is not a material force. It acts upon the understandings, still more upon the wills of men. You know that it may be a most immoral, a most detestable power; one which leads to all mischievous acts, to all lying habits of mind. Yet you cannot banish it from your commonwealths. You cannot diminish it without diminishing human sympathy, without making human beings more inhuman. Whence does it come? How can you direct it? Will you consider the story we have been reading today? A set of Galilean fishermen, noted for an uncouth dialect, are met at a Jewish feast, at which men from all parts of the Roman and the Parthian Empires are gathered. Suddenly, we are told, they begin to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gives them utterance. They make themselves understood; those who hear, feel that through the stammering tongues of such simple men, One is speaking to them Who knows what is in them, and what they want. We have a

stereotyped explanation of this mystery. It was necessary that the Apostles should know different languages, that they might preach the Gospel effectually. The Apostles themselves do not speak of this necessity; they do not seem to have been aware of it. But they did feel the need of learning that the words which they used, in their own tongue or any other, were not their own. They did need to learn that words were an awful trust, for which they must give account to Him from Whom they came. They did need to feel that words are the witnesses and instruments of communion between men and men, not because they are animals, but because they are spirits, and because a Divine Spirit is speaking to them. Is not this the secret of the orator's power? Is there not a Spirit of Power from whom all his capacity of influencing his fellows, of acting upon his fellows, is derived? If he remembers his responsibility to that Power,—if he habitually confesses it as the source of his own,—if he never dares, under one pretence or another, above all, under any religious pretence, to trifle with truth and honesty, what health there will be in his speech, what health it will impart! How his words will clear the air of its mists, instead of raising mists to make the air dark and stifling! And how, if we hold this faith, each of us, though we possess none of the special gifts of the orator, we shall feel the grandeur, the fearfulness of that organ of speech which has been committed to us all! With what

shame and repentance we shall confess the truth of St. James's lesson, that the tongue is a little member which no *man* can tame, which requires another ruler than man to keep it from sending forth poison,—nay, in his own tremendous but not exaggerated language, from *"setting on fire the course of Nature, even as it is set on fire of hell!"* That is what malicious, lying words can do; that is their origin. If there is not this Spirit of Power to quell them and to purify them, they will laugh to scorn laws, conventions, all the charms and restraints that our wisdom can invent.

There is another power mixed frequently with this, but yet different in its direction and its nature, which also can be limited to no country, or circumstances, or stage of cultivation. The *physician*, the healer, is welcomed in all lands by different titles, but always for this reason, that he can in some way act on the life of men, can oppose the powers that are threatening life. In some regions his functions are hardly distinguished from those of the *priest*, because he too is conversant about life and death, a life or death that may continue when the resources of the ordinary physician are exhausted. Think how these powers, separate or combined, working in alliance or hostility, meet you, into whatever part of the earth you travel! Think how they mingle with ancient traditions, with philosophical theories, with hints and promises of good that you are afraid of weakening, with an immorality, lying, slavery, that are dragging nations into perdi-

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tion! Think how vain the efforts of the statesman are to encounter them when their operation is most pernicious; how generally, in our time, he gives over the endeavour as a hopeless, and even as a wrong one; how he considers it his best chance to make some tolerable compromise with those who claim supernatural agencies, be they of what kind they may. For in fact he cannot stop to inquire of what kind they are, whether the priests invoke a Destroyer or Deliverer, or each by turns; whether they reckon Cursing or Blessing their mightiest and most desirable weapon; whether they deliberately hold Truth or Falsehood to be the most religious.

But if we refer all powers that physicians or that priests can exert over the bodies or the spirits of men to that Spirit who dwelt in Jesus Christ; if we believe that He came into the world to baptize us with that Spirit; if we suppose that God has given us that Spirit and no other;—then all love of cursing, all tampering with falsehood under any pretext, all attempt to obtain reputation or influence by practising on men's ignorance or baseness, can be regarded as nothing less than blasphemy against the most high God, than a trafficking with the Spirit of Evil. Such sins in those whom God has appointed as the witnesses of His goodness, the ministers of His gifts to mankind, must be more terrible and penal than they can be in any other persons. The Christian priest ought to know that he is as liable to this abuse of his

power as any Brahmin, and that in him it has a far deeper criminality, because it is a direct contradiction of this doctrine concerning God's Spirit, which he exists to proclaim, an attempt to quench His light in himself and in other men. A reflection surely which will drive him, if anything can, to that Spirit as his only refuge from his own presumption and wilfulness.

Once more. The most simple, naked exhibition of human power is in that royal Will, which obtains supremacy by claiming it,—which compels individuals and nations, they know not how, to own that it is meant to rule them, and that they must needs obey, That such a force as this exists, it is as idle to deny as to deny the force of sea or wind. To pretend that any precautions of policy or knowledge have been found adequate to prevent the intrusion of such forces, or to hinder men from yielding to them, is to deny the facts of history as much as the courtiers of Canute denied the facts of Nature. But there is a limit to this force somewhere. We all feel and know that there is. We are certain that the most settled, organized tyranny is still a rebellion, and must end as rebellions end. What is the warrant for this conviction? Whit-Sunday says it is this, that the highest power, the all-ruling Will, was manifested in One who took upon Him the form of a Servant,—who came upon earth not to be ministered unto, but to minister. It says that He who thus descended is the same that has ascended far above all Heavens, that

He might to fill all things. It says that His noblest gift to men is His own Spirit of Power. It says that to that Spirit all spirits must at last bow; that any will which is mere arbitrary will—which does not seek to deliver and to raise those whom it rules —must be broken in pieces; that the only effectual power will be proved at last to be that which can give up itself.

III. If the world was to be instructed that all power of speech, of imparting life and wisdom to men, of governing societies, is of God, and is His gift to His creatures, certainly no teachers could be so suitable as those Galileans who spoke only one rough dialect, which their own countrymen counted ridiculous; who had no art but that of mending their nets; who had trembled not only before priests and rulers, but before men-servants and maid-servants. And yet I know not whether there was not something even more wonderful in the selection of these men to show that all *Love* is of God; that His Spirit is the author of whatever love men are able to exhibit in acts or to feel within. For as Jews they had learnt to despise and hate all the uncircumcised; as Galileans they must often have been jealous of that more favoured part of their own race, which looked down upon them. They had been chosen, indeed, by a Teacher who bore all their narrowness and ignorance; who educated them by a careful and gracious discipline for the work to which He had des-

tined them. Their affection had been drawn out towards Him; that affection had been a bond to each other, though interrupted by continual desires in each of them to be the chief in His kingdom. But their affection had been tried, and had broken down. It had failed towards the Master; what strength could there be in it towards any of their fellows? If love was their own, or had its springs in them, it must be utterly dried up. Then reflect how it burst forth, how it poured itself out first upon Jews, who scorned them; next upon Gentiles, whom it had been part of their religion to scorn; to see what it could endure—not merely of sudden violent hostility, but of continuous, ever-increasing bitterness and contempt, taking all new and unsuspected forms; and this while they were proving and confessing that they had precisely the same inclinations to be spiteful and malicious, now as ever, with that new irritation which comes from the disappointment of affections and hopes. So they were trained to understand that there must be about them and with them a Spirit of ever-living, long-suffering love, the heights and depths of which they could never measure,—of which they could only say, It is the Spirit of Him who died upon the Cross, and who in that death manifested the very nature of His eternal Father and His purposes to men. This Spirit has been given to us, that we may be moulded into conformity with that nature,—that we may be heralds of that purpose,

While we are subject to His guidance, actuated by His energy, we can claim men of all kindreds and nations as children of the same Father, as brothers one of another. We can bind them into a society of witnesses for Christ's redemption of the world,—for Christ's dominion over the world. Trusting to our own powers and our love, we should be the feeblest of all creatures for good, nay,—through the greatness of the commission which we have set at nought, the most potent of all creatures for mischief.

Brethren! it is this Whitsuntide lesson which we must get by heart, even as these Galileans did. We have talked of our love to men; some have spoken of their love to God. Both professions may be real; there may be a genuine sympathy in a number of hearts for the miseries of their fellow-creatures whom they see, or whom they only hear of; that sympathy may prompt active exertions as well as benevolent words. There may be a sense of gratitude, sometimes of overpowering gratitude to God for mercies which have been bestowed, for sins which have been forgiven. But, oh! the infinite danger that this philanthropy should become a hollow fashion, of which the phrases are repeated today because we had some feeling that corresponded to them yesterday! What danger that the well-being of hundreds of millions may be less dear to us than the triumph of a party, —nay, that we may make grand sentences about the hundreds of millions into mere tools for working out

our own beggarly and selfish triumphs! What probability that, not grand philanthropy only, but private friendship, once most cordial,—love, once passionate and deep,—may become chilled, may be quite frozen by petty jealousies and suspicions. And yet more perilous still are those warm religious emotions which seem to carry the very pledge and seal of eternity in them. How hard to admit frankly that they are not what they were! How many arts will a man be tempted to use that he may persuade himself they are not changed! How he will try to keep up warmth in himself by denouncing others! How at last he may cast aside all faith, declaring that he knows it to be a delusion, and that he would save others if he could from the imposture to which he has yielded!

Where was his original mistake? What is the original falsehood of all who speak of their love to God and man? This: they take credit to themselves for a love which is moving them to noble thoughts and good deeds, but which has another source than their hearts; which is divine, not earthly; universal, not partial. How may they be saved from casting off all that is true in them, when they discover that they have been false? By frankly confessing that falsehood to the Spirit of Truth who is convincing them of it. By owning the horrible vanity and conceit of their supposition, that they loved men better than their Father in Heaven loved them; that their love was anything but the result or reaction of His; that they can

be anything but His agents and ministers to declare by words or deeds a little of what He is.

IV. Finally, this Spirit is said to be the Spirit of a sound mind. In the last century there was a nervous fear even among wise and great divines, of touching upon such subjects as those I have considered today, because they said there was no calculating what self-willed fanaticism, what extravagant heresies, what contempt of guidance and authority had followed and could follow upon the notion that Christ had bestowed His Spirit, not upon doctors, but upon human beings. They were right. It was impossible, it always will be impossible, to calculate the vagaries of the human spirit, the thickly-coming fancies and wild conceits which haunt the student in his chamber — the union of physical emotions and nervous impressions with profound moral convictions in the heart of the devotee,— the practices and doctrines which are suggested partly by the sin-sick conscience of the penitent, partly by the over-cleverness of the confessor; the effect upon the minds of a people kept in ignorance of a sudden rush of light into the midst of their darkness; the indignation springing from the discovery which the Scriptures impart, if they impart nothing else, that God's highest blessings are meant for the wayfarer; the confused feeling mingling with this indignation that the wayfarer must have faculties that can reach to all heights and sound all depths. No; you cannot make any estimate or guess of the wildness and

madness into which man may be led. And therefore *you* cannot provide the remedy for this wildness and madness, or any adequate protection against it. Do you think you know of some adequate remedy or protection? Perhaps you will say it lies in the Church. Well, but Whit-Sunday says that the Church stands upon the gift of a divine Spirit—that this is the very ground of its stability and universality. Perhaps you say the Scriptures will be a defence. Be it so. Open them as wide as you can. But their testimony is that the baptism with this Spirit is the end of all God's dispensations. Must you not then have made a prodigious mistake in seeking to keep this knowledge back through fear of the excesses to which it will lead?

May not this be, after all, the one security against these excesses? May not the Spirit of God keep better watch over those minds which He has taken into His guardianship, than you can keep? May not the great lesson you have to teach the student, the devotee, the penitent, the confessor, the ordinary wayfarer, be this: that there is a Spirit of a sound mind near them—a Spirit who knows how all are tempted—who knows what temptation is strongest for each—who is seeking to unite them in a common fellowship—who is guiding them to the same haven—who will suffer none that would act rightly to be without the necessary aids to action, none that would seek truth to be lost in falsehood; who will continually assist the desire to do right in those who are conscious of the inclination to wrong—who will for ever kindle

afresh the zeal for truth in those who feel that they are beginning to acquiesce in plausible lies?

To tell men that such a guiding Spirit of Power, of Love, of a Sound Mind, has been given them, and is with them,—this is not dangerous, but safe. Believing this, they need not sink into imbecility and fear; they can cultivate every power of which they are conscious; they can be sure that God Himself is cultivating it for the good of His creatures; they can overcome the tendencies to narrowness, to baseness, to selfishness, which are every moment at work upon them, knowing that the love, power, wisdom which created the earth and the heaven are also at work upon them. They can avoid the thousand motives, within and around them, to fanaticism, superstition, exaltation of their own intellects, because the Spirit of all Wisdom has not left them to choose their own follies.

Only it is needful continually to recollect that this Spirit, though given to us, can never be boasted of as ours. He is with us as the light and air are with us; with us to raise us out of ourselves; with us to teach us of the Father and the Son, from whom He is ever proceeding. Therefore, it is in this confession of our rebellion and vanity, in blessing the Father for the redemption of mankind by His Son, in eating the flesh and drinking the blood of that Son who gave Himself for the life of the world, that we truly keep Whit-Sunday; that we begin to learn something of the unspeakable gift of which it bears witness to us and to our race.

Trinity Sunday.

June 19, 1859.

EPHESIANS IV. 5, 6.

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, AND THROUGH ALL, AND IN YOU ALL."

THERE was a time when Sermons upon Trinity Sunday were expected to be controversial. On other days the preacher might address himself to the topics in which all his hearers were interested—might appeal to their conscience of evil and their desire of good—might arm them for the toils and temptations of the week. Upon this he had the privilege or the duty, whichever he might deem it, of confuting objectors and establishing his own conclusions. He might exhibit much strategical talent in choosing his position and his weapons. He might stand on the defensive, and defy the deniers of our Creeds to prove anything against a mystery which transcended all human powers of thought and reasoning. Or he might maintain that a long tradition must have a worth which a small minority of dissidents cannot shake. Or he might gather together a set of texts from different parts of the Bible, and argue that al-

together they created an amount of probability in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity far exceeding the probabilities against it which might be derived from another set of texts. Or he might rely on some one especial text, maintaining that if that held its place in the Canon, the question was settled for all who did not deny the Scriptures to possess divine authority.

I do not think that those who follow the course of our Services can regard Trinity Sunday as standing apart from the other Sundays of the year, or as demanding an exceptional treatment. From Advent we appear to have been tracing a series of discoveries or manifestations of which this day records the latest and deepest. It is not that one *doctrine* has been added to another; all our Collects, Epistles, and Gospels have related to a *Person*. He has been clothing Himself in the weakness of our mortal nature; He has been showing forth power and glory through that weakness. He has been tempted by the Devil. He has endured death, has been laid in the grave, has known the secrets of the dark world, has risen again. He has ascended to His Father. He has sent the Spirit of His Father to dwell with men, to bind them together into a fellowship consisting of all tribes and nations, to awaken and govern the powers of their spirits. And this Sunday proclaims the day to be come in which, according to Christ's promise, we may know that He is in the Father, and we in Him,

and He in us, and so may worship the Father and the Son in the Unity of the Spirit. Henceforth all our Sundays are Sundays after Trinity;—Sundays in which this Name and this Worship unfold themselves in relation to the struggles, temptations, sufferings of our social and personal existence.

Services such as these, which have formed a continuous education for the people of our land from age to age, must certainly have been intended, in St. Paul's language, to bring them into "*the fellowship of this Mystery.*" Our discourses must be greatly at variance with them, if we represent the Mystery as one with which common men *cannot* have fellowship, —which they are to contemplate as hopelessly divided from them. Any scholastical apologies, however plausible, which leave that impression upon the minds of our hearers, must tend to undermine the faith which we have thanked God today for giving us grace to confess. Will the argument from Tradition be more effectual for the confirmation of that faith? The best and noblest part of the Tradition witnesses of times when this faith was not the faith of a majority, but of an utterly insignificant and despised minority. Those were the times when it was maintained most vigorously. As our Collect intimates, they who confessed the glory of the Eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty worshiped the Unity, learnt their lesson in adversity, and had to pray that they might be kept through it. Are we to

cast away these healthful and invigorating recollections for the pleasure of telling opponents that they must be wrong, because the East and the West are against them, as they were once against Athanasius? What comes again of our heaping together isolated texts? This, I believe, is the fruit of it:—1st, a confused notion forced upon other minds—reacting on our own—that we are fighting for a certain notion of ours which has need of much ingenuity and special pleading to sustain it, not for a truth of God's which can defend and prove itself; 2ndly, that the Bible is an agglomeration of sentences and decrees which can with difficulty be persuaded to give out a harmonious sense; 3dly, that it is wise to suppress or conceal passages which, if there is a Revelation, are as important for our own well-being and for the discovery of God's purposes as those upon which we insist. And if we make the stress of our reasoning rest upon some one text, God's gracious providence, it may be, will fairly rend that one away from us, as if to teach us the difference between His methods and ours; as if to force the conviction upon us that the Name of Him who inhabiteth Eternity is not dependent on the reading of a manuscript.

The passage which I have taken from the Epistle to the Ephesians is not one which would ever be quoted by a controversialist to establish the doctrine of the Trinity. It has, I doubt not, often been seized by the opposer of that doctrine, because the

word 'One' occurs so often in it, and because it so clearly distinguishes the 'one Lord' from the 'one Father.' There has been no more unhappy consequence of our method of arguing than this, that we are supposed to have an interest in passing over those passages of Scripture which assert strongly all the dependence of the Son upon the Father, even those which speak of the oneness of the Godhead; as if each of our creeds could not be set at nought and falsified, were there not that dependence and that oneness; as if Trinity Sunday were not emphatically the day on which we profess to worship the Unity. Just because there is no dogmatic statement in St. Paul's words—just because Unity is the subject of them—they illustrate, it seems to me most strikingly, the course which the Church takes in preparing us for this festival, as well as when she initiates us into the meaning of it.

I. The Apostle speaks first of one *Lord*. Those words would have at once recalled to a Jew the sentence which had been repeated to him since he could speak: "*The Lord thy God is One Lord.*" And surely much of the emphasis of this divine sentence lay in the word *Thy*. Multitudes of things surround thee and crave thy worship. There is *One* near thee, ruling thee, caring for thee, jealous of thee, who claims thy heart for Himself. He is the Lord.

What impression did this name make on those

Jews who had walked with Jesus in the streets and sat with him in the ship on the lake,—who had been with him on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane? They had called Him Lord and Master; and He said they had done well in calling Him so, for He was that. But how could they keep this name from interfering with the homage to the One Lord whom Israel worshiped, whom no one had seen or could see? It was a deep, practical question; it affected their whole lives. Was there not a danger, an infinite danger, of those lives becoming divided; of their affections being more at war than their understandings; of their reverencing two Lords instead of One, the Visible more than the Invisible?

II. "*One Faith.*" The Jew had been taught to put his whole trust in the Lord God of Israel. Faith or Trust was the principle of his being; losing that, he lost everything. The different objects of sense were appealing to him every moment. He could care for them or dread them; but he could not trust them. He must have one faith, or they become his Masters; he must have one faith, or there was nothing to bind him to his brother Israelites; he must have one faith, or his manliness forsook him.

The disciples of Jesus felt that He was appealing to their faith or trust, and to the faith and trust of every person whom He healed or to whom He spake. They felt that if they gave Him their unlimited faith or trust, they were better men; that if they withheld it,

they became more victims of their own senses and inclinations and follies. But how could they cherish this entire faith in Him, and also cherish it in the one Lord of whom the Law and the Prophets spoke?

III. "*One Baptism.*" "*I baptize you with water,*" said John in the wilderness. "*One cometh after me, who shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*" The Baptism of John had been a witness that the One God of their fathers was calling them to turn round to Him from all the visible objects and the the secret lusts to which they had yielded; that He was sending away their sins, and confirming His covenant with them. Who was this Other that was to come with a mightier power, to bestow a greater blessing? What was this Spirit with which He would baptize?

The Apostles must have often asked themselves these questions. They were forced upon them by our Lord Himself at the last Supper. There He was speaking—in language which sounded sometimes quite unintelligible to them, which sometimes sent a flash of strange light into their inmost souls—of a Comforter whom He would send from the Father, of a Spirit of Truth, who should teach them that He was in the Father and the Father in Him. What a sense of division from their nation, in their own hearts, must they have experienced then! What a glimpse of a Unity such as they had never dreamed of!

IV. "*One God and Father of all.*" One Lord the

Law and the Prophets had spoken of. But this name of Father—who had uttered that? It came forth when Jesus went up into the Mount to proclaim the fulfilment, not the destruction, of that which had been said in the old time. The very essence of His discourse was gathered into that word. It penetrated all His speech, all His acts afterwards. But then was it spoken out in all its power, when He said, "*I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God.*" Then did the belief of "One God and Father of all" begin to break through the Jewish exclusiveness, to prove that the Jewish election had this for its final result. One God and Father of all, because One Man who can say, "I came from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father."

I have shown you how each of these clauses rises above the other, and how each helps to the interpretation of the other. But I have shown you also that there is something in each which appears to threaten the perfect unity of which it bears witness. It is not till the "One Lord" had bestowed upon the disciples who were struggling to keep up the one faith in Him, the baptism of the one Spirit, that they, a set of divided men, with opposing tastes, inclinations, tempers, were able "in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity;" because they confessed the new Name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, with which they were to seal all the nations.

V. The last clause of the text, "*Who is above all, and through all, and in you all,*" will recall to you some words of which I spoke to you a few months ago,—the words of St. Paul on Mars' Hill, "*Though He be not far from every one of us, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.*" I said that those words would be called by many Pantheistical, if they had not the sanction of an Apostle. I believe that these *have* been called Pantheistical, though they have the sanction of the same Apostle. I would rather men uttered this thought, at least to themselves, than that they entertained it without confessing it. For then, perhaps, they may begin to ask what that Pantheism which they dread, and have a right to dread, is; whether there is nothing in the heart of us all which responds to it and fosters it; whether it can ever be met by a mere hard, dry contradiction; whether the mystery of the Trinity in Unity, which we are considering today, is not that true faith which justifies all that is true in it, eliminates what is immoral and dangerous?

(*a.*) The first words, "*Who is above all,*" would not suggest the notion of Greek or modern Pantheism to any one. They recall the words of the old Hebrew song, "*O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the earth; Thou hast set Thy glory above the Heavens.*" He was far above the Sun and Moon and Stars, which the Heathen were worshiping. They spoke of Him; He could not be in them. But then

came the other part of the hymn, which is just as truly Hebrew, and without which indeed the other could not be so: "*What is* MAN *that Thou art mindful of Him, and the Son of Man that Thou visitest Him? Thou crownest Him with glory and honour, Thou hast set Him over the works of Thy hands.*" The Lord is above Sun and Moon and Stars, because He is more related to man than He is to them. Man cannot see Him in them, because He visits *him* and cares for *him*. And yet the contrast is very wonderful! Such glory and such insignificance! What does it mean? Who can tell?

The Epistle to the Hebrews gives the New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament marvel: "*We see not yet,*" it says, "*all things put under man; but we see Jesus, who for the suffering of death was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour.*" The Son of God has stooped to the lowest condition of the creature. The Son of Man, the Head of the Race, He who has "tasted death for every man," is exalted far above all things. Here is the glory that is above the Heavens, brought out in union, inseparable, eternal union with the sympathy for the beggar and the outcast. The glory that is above the Heavens is the glory of an Infinite Love, which could only be revealed in a death on the Cross. We may not bow to any created thing, for He who has united us to Himself is one with that Father who is above all.

(*b.*) But now comes that phrase in which Pantheism appears to lurk. He is "*through all.*" The words, I grant you, are startling. Would to God that they startled us more! Would to God that they made us tremble habitually! We find ourselves in a strange medley of circumstances. Some of them we call petty, some grand. Some seem to start out of the present hour; some have on them the stamp and dust of ages. We try to dispose them and manage them. The old legend of St. Peter is repeated in our experience. He asked leave to govern the world for a day. He spent that day in pursuing a single goat over the hills, and had to lament in the evening that it was too wild for his control. But there is an order in this medley of things. They belong to a Universe, not a Chaos. Whence comes their law? The old Heathen Philosopher said, 'There must be a soul in them.' What was that soul? If it governed the movements of the world, must it not be a God? Here was Pantheism; here was the worship of a World-god. It was the direct contradiction of the belief in a God who was *above* the world. But what was that belief when it was set in direct contradiction to this? The belief of a mere Power commanding all things, sympathizing with nothing; the belief of a Power apart from all those powers in the Universe which nevertheless must be confessed by men, —must act upon them every hour. Where was the refuge from the miserable alternative for them? Where is it for us?

I believe, my brethren, only in the recognition of a Filial Word, one with that Father who is *above* all, speaking *through* all things; *in the World*, as St. John says, which "*was made by Him, though the World knew Him not;*" actually God, and yet *with* God. Thus is the dream of Greek Pantheism substantiated; thus is it reconciled with the sternest Hebrew faith in God as absolute and as distinct from all His creatures; thus are we saved from the heartlessness of an all-excluding Theology, and from the equal heartlessness of an all-comprehending Philosophy.

But the deliverance is not complete if we do not contemplate Pantheism on its other side. No Heathen could be *satisfied* with his belief in a soul of the *World*. He had derived the idea of such a soul from himself. *He* was conscious of something which directed the movements of his bodily frame, his acts, his opinions. If the world's soul was divine, must not his be more divine? Must he not be an emanation from the God;—must he not be a God?

A more fearful conclusion than the other, yet more difficult to avoid, because if the conscience shrinks from it, there is that in us which bribes us to it, which has bribed all men since the serpent said, "*Ye shall be as Gods.*" Yes! but part of the serpent's promise was fulfilled. Ye shall know *evil*. And the other part has been fulfilled, because it was not the serpent's promise, but God's. Ye shall know *good*. For thus speaks St. John: "*In Him* [the Word] *was*

Life, and the Life was the Light of Men. And the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." The good is His light shining into men's hearts; the evil has been the selfish darkness which has tried to extinguish it. We sink into the darkness, we become isolated from our kind, wrapped in solitude and atheism, when we try to become Gods by taking credit for the good to ourselves; we rise into the highest state that men can attain—the state, not of Gods, but of Sons of God—when we confess all the evil to be our own, and believe and trust in the Good which is in Christ the Word of God—when He is revealed to us as "*the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth.*"

When St. Paul preached Christ to the Ephesians, he took from them no treasures which they had possessed before. If they no longer

> "Had sight of Proteus coming from the sea,
> Or heard old Triton wind his writhed horn,"

the voice of Him who spoke to his disciples on the Lake of Tiberias might be heard in the billows of the ocean, might rise to them out of its depths. Every dear familiar hill might have the sacredness and the awfulness of that Thessalian hill in which the Thunderer sat, for from every one might be heard the echoes of that voice which said on the mountain of Galilee: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit;*" "*Blessed are the pure in heart.*" The fountains had their old

honour, for each one who brought his pitcher to them had a right to the words which were spoken once in Samaria: "*The water which I will give thee shall be in thee a well of water springing up to everlasting life.*" No old hero who had done good deeds for his city or his land could want any portion of his former glory. New glory must belong to him. For He who is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, had been the author of every right deed and worthy impulse. Greeks had been right in saying that whatever had the true sign of humanity upon it had been divine; only the inhuman, false elements which had mixed with them were from beneath, and were doomed to destruction. And thus, brethren, even thus it behoves us with purged ears to hear the Co-eternal Word speaking to us through sea and earth and air; thus should all the harmonies of Nature be received by us, not as hers, but as His. And when those harmonies are disturbed by jarring notes from the cries of our fellow-men, let us not be content till we can discover through them also the voice of a Lord, who alone makes us capable of understanding each other, without whom no utterance would come forth from us, for there would be no thought in us. It is awful to think that if we take the wings of the morning, or ascend into Heaven, or dive into Hell, we cannot escape from the Divine Presence. It may be more awful to think that we can converse with no friend or no enemy, but some

message comes to us through them from God. But could we bear that it should be otherwise? If the world succeeded, if men succeeded, in causing that God should not speak through them, should not manifest Himself through them, would not they succeed in annihilating themselves;—would not Death be the universal lord?

(*c.*) There is yet one clause more. According to one reading it corresponds exactly to those which preceded, "*Above all, through all, in all.*" That which our translators have adopted sacrifices the symmetry of the sentence. But the change directly suggests a meaning which is certainly latent in the other. I cannot doubt that St. Paul wished the Ephesians to recollect that God, who was above all and through all, was in *them* all; that His presence was the only cause of *their* fellowship and unity. It was the lesson which he had been inculcating on them throughout his letter. No men had been more possessed than they were by the belief of spiritual agencies and spiritual communications. Their city had been the favourite haunt of enchanters; fifty thousand pieces of silver had been the value of the books of curious arts which they burned. They did not need to be told of *a* Spirit ruling and working among men. But it was all-important that they should know what manner of Spirit it was. A Spirit of divination and imposture, or a Spirit of truth? A Spirit of self-exaltation, or a Spirit that cultivates humbleness and the surrender

of all high conceits and imaginations? A Spirit of division, or a Spirit of love? This was the question for the city of Ephesus to consider in the time of St. Paul. Brethren, is it not the question for the cities of England to consider in the nineteenth century? We have not fallen upon a time when spiritual influences and powers are thought impossible, or are derided. That unbelief which was prevalent a century ago has been vanquished. There are openings in our day for as many kinds of spiritual delusion and imposture as prevailed in the Roman Empire during the first century. If a few have entered and have been cherished by the wise as well as the foolish, there is no reason why a multitude that we cannot dream of should not darken the air and defy all scientific exorcists to banish them. Now then it is needful, above all things, to declare what Spirit we believe is intended to have dominion over the wills and reasons, not of a few men, but of all. Now it is needful to testify that the Spirit with which we are baptized is the Spirit who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; the Spirit who strives with the pride, malice, lusts, uncharitableness, that are working in us for the ruin of us all; the Spirit who is working in all that they may submit to the one Lord; who will bring into harmony the different fragments of the one Faith that are scattered through all the world; who will baptize all at last with that fire which shall consume all that is corrupt and false in His

Church and Universe; who will not allow our spirits to rest till they have ascended through the Filial Word to the Father of all; who will make all that is above us, all that is around, all that is within us, into His Temple; who will enable us to offer our souls and bodies as holy and acceptable sacrifices to Him.

Brethren, these, I think, are the lessons, the deep, practical lessons which Trinity Sunday contains for us. I have said that there is in our modern society the capacity for all the dark superstitions that have invaded former ages. I have said that I see no escape from that danger unless we fully recognize a Spirit such as Whit-Sunday proclaims to us. May I not say on this day, that Unity is, consciously or unconsciously, the end for which we are all striving? The end sometimes looks hopelessly distant, sometimes very near. Must it not be hopelessly distant, must not the attainment of it be impossible, if it is dependent on some decrees, dogmas, maxims of uniformity, compromises or eclectical schemes of creatures so ignorant, so narrow, so self-exalting as we are? Must it not be very near, if it is involved in the very Nature of the Father of all; of the Son, by whom we were created and redeemed; of the Spirit, who worketh in us to will and do of their good pleasure;—if we have been adopted into God's Family, and baptized with His Name, that we may show forth His Unity?

First Sunday after Trinity.

June 26, 1859.

MATTHEW XI. 11.

"VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, AMONG THEM THAT ARE BORN OF WOMEN THERE HATH NOT RISEN A GREATER THAN JOHN THE BAPTIST; NOTWITHSTANDING HE THAT IS LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS GREATER THAN HE."

THE Festival of John the Baptist has fallen this year in the week which commenced with Trinity Sunday. That circumstance, which has led me to choose this passage, may perhaps suggest some hints for the illustration of it.

I. John the Baptist, we are sometimes told, produced a *religious revival* in Judea, like in kind to those which we hear of in America, and sometimes in this country. There is an advantage in such comparisons, in so far as they make us feel that men are essentially the same in one generation as another; the same in the burdens which oppress them; in the evils to which they have yielded; in their craving for a divine message. I do not complain at all of the assumption, that such a message may be heard, and

has been heard, in one period and one country as much as in another. The Collect of the Church which speaks of John the Baptist as the model of later ministers, would mean nothing if it were not so; our Lord's words in the text would mean very little. The more we regard John's preaching as the type of all common preaching,—the example of what it should be,—the better I am sure it will be for us. And that is one of my reasons for questioning the correctness of the opinion, that there was any essential resemblance between it and that special kind of preaching which aims at awakening what is called a stronger sense of religion in a nation, or a more intense concern about the safety of the individual soul.

Some external resemblances will strike us at once; they are worthy of observation. John had as little apparent claim to be heard as any preacher who should appear at this day on some English moor. He was not known till he spoke; his speech contained his credentials. That commended itself to people of all kinds and degrees; that broke down the distinctions of classes; that could compel men to listen who were immersed in the traffic or pleasures of the world. There were no miracles to establish John's mission; he had no patrons; it was to the heart of men he appealed; that responded to the appeal. So far there is no advantage on the side of him who drew all Jerusalem, Judæa, and the country beyond Jordan to hear him.

Perhaps one may say there were considerable disadvantages. In most of these modern movements one hears of a considerable amount of machinery which is used to aid, if not to produce, the effect at which the preacher aims. The scene is carefully chosen; all circumstances are called in to heighten it; there is arrangement and co-operation. Such appliances are entirely absent in the other case. The preacher is alone. He has not gone into the wilderness because it is a more impressive place than a town; he has been dwelling there; it has become his home. His dress and food may be unlike those to which citizens are most accustomed; but it is natural to him; it is not unfamiliar to them. They will expect it of an Anchorite, and Anchorites in Palestine were anything but rare. The Essenes were almost as well known as the Sadducees. A friar's rope and bare feet may excite a moment's notice in an English village; who would be the least influenced by the sight in Spain or Belgium?

There was nothing, then, in the mere accidents of the preacher to draw crowds; nothing, so far as we can make out, in his manner or the tone of his voice. No doubt they may have been suitable to the words which he delivered; we always expect that they will be; but, if so, the impression which they will make must depend on the quality of those words. Now it is here that one discovers the characteristic difference between John and most of those vehement and suc-

cessful orators in Protestant or Romanist churches with whom he has been compared. St. John did not come in the wilderness proclaiming that there was a great absence of interest about religion in his time; that it was not cared for as it had been cared for in days gone by. There were no symptoms in Jewish society, whether we derive our impression of it from the Evangelists, or from its own professed historian, which would have warranted such a complaint. It is not made afterwards by our Lord; He did not direct His apostles to make it, when He sent them forth into the different cities and villages into which He was to come. One would gather from His discourses, and from all other indications, that it was a religious age; that if there had been indifference respecting the Scriptures, or the ordinances of worship, the indifference had disappeared. The Law and the Prophets were read and studied. Innumerable questions arising out of them were zealously canvassed. The open deniers of their authority were few. Those who thought that one part of them had more worth than another were in a minority. Herodian statesmen respected their decrees. There might be ignorance and barbarism enough in some districts, but the body of the people were not forgotten. The synagogues were established for their use.

It may be said that this was mere general, national religion; that it had nothing to do with the individual man. The Pharisees would have felt the charge par-

ticularly inapplicable to them. The holiness at which they aimed might be false or true. But it was not false because it enjoined certain general practices instead of applying them to specific cases. It was minutely specific. Each man was in danger of violating some law, and so of incurring some divine penalty; each man for himself must ask how he could obtain a probable forgiveness; how he might hope to escape the penalty. Only by a high individual religious practice could he have the least hope of attaining any blessings in the world to come. And that world was far more constantly presented to the fears and expectations of Jews in this period of their history than in any which had preceded it.

Religion then had revived in Palestine before the time of the Baptist; if he had said that it had not, and that he came to revive it, there would have been no answer in the conscience to his words; all Jerusalem and Judæa would not have gone out to his baptism. The message which he brought was especially to those who were most busy with all the occupations, professions, duties of it; not to them exclusively; not to them more encouragingly or hopefully than to those who were living indifferent, even reckless lives; but to them as sharing the same Covenant with all upon whom they had looked down and from whom they were standing apart, to them as entitled to claim the common hope of Israelites—as having no other which they could claim, as not having a char-

ter of exemption from any terrors which were coming upon Israel.

Yes! John came preaching the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of Sins to all who wanted Repentance and Remission of Sins. And men in that religious age felt this want, and felt also that no religion which they possessed had met the want. They did not prove to themselves by arguments that they were sinners, or that they deserved God's wrath. There was in them a sense of wrong—palpable, direct wrong. Parents, who passed for very respectable and righteous, knew in their inmost hearts that they had not done what they might have done, and were bound to do, for their children. Children, who might be much more religious than their fathers, felt that they had not reverenced them or obeyed them, as God's law commanded that they should. Those who had never been suspected of false swearing, who had never been guilty of light swearing, knew that they had taken God's name in vain when they seemed to be honouring it most. With what frivolous talk some knew they had demolished the reputation of their neighbours; with what covetous, envious eyes others had feasted on their possessions. Such violations of the commandments stood out in clear sunlight before the consciences of those who had committed no overt acts on the peace of society,—who passed for its creditable, devout members. Was it different with those who knew they had stolen,—that they had broken the

marriage vow, or caused others to break it,—that they had committed foul and secret murder? On each and all sat a weight,—at times scarcely felt, at times intolerably oppressive; but one that crushed the spirit, made work insincere, rest impossible. What did it profit to ask, 'Have others more or less of this 'pain; hast thou less or more of it to expect here-'after?' There it was; to be rid of it, or of that which caused it, was the great necessity. The most discriminating judge of the criminality of different offences, the most benignant flatterer of the particular transgressor, could do nothing for him; only one, who said, 'Thou and the evil may part company, it may 'be severed from thee as far as the east is from the 'west,' could afford him any consolation.

This was the message that came from the Wilderness, which the Baptism in the river Jordan explained and confirmed. Whence it came John took no pains to prove. He had no testimonies of his commission, but the testimonies which the hearts and consciences of men and women bore to it. He said, 'It is God 'who calls to repentance; it is God who sends away 'sins. This Baptism is His, not mine.' They said, 'It is God who has made us know our sins. It is God 'who stirs us to repentance. It is God who separates 'between us and evil.'

There were some who saw nothing of this in the Baptism. They came to it because other people came to it; because they could not tell that it might

not have some virtue; because they were glad that irreligious men—people of the lower orders who had led bad lives—should have this stimulus and motive to be more decorous. For that kind of men, vulgar preachers like John, outward signs like Baptism, might no doubt be of much use. These leaders of Jewish schools and sects were those with whom John dealt so rudely. These he asked, 'Who had bidden them 'flee from the wrath to come?' He signified to them very distinctly that a day of the Lord was at hand, a day which would be in some very terrible sense a day of wrath; a day which would reach the whole land, from the highest to the lowest; a day in which no one would fare better than another, except so far as he was more simply trusting in the Lord and Deliverer of Israel, and rejoicing in His appearing. For that this coming day, this day of suffering, of judgment, of wrath, was a day to be desired, a day that would fulfil the longings of men as well as their fears, was implied in all John's discourse. He was preparing the way for a Lord whose shoe's latchet he was not worthy to unloose. This Baptism with water was to inaugurate a higher baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

II. How could these characteristics of John the Baptist have earned for him the praise, "*Among them that are born of women none is greater*"? We should surely have thought that Elijah was greater; that Isaiah was greater. He spoke who

knew, and we may be permitted to trace by the light of Scripture at least some of the principles of His judgment. If John had urged his countrymen to be religious, or to take care of their souls, he might have been greater than previous prophets; but he would have been so utterly unlike them in language and spirit, that any comparison between them would have been impossible. Elijah seemed to Jezebel a denouncer of religion, one who was putting the souls of the people in jeopardy—because he called on them to choose between Baal and the Lord God of Israel; because he mocked the priests; because at last he slew them and overthrew their altars. Isaiah, writing in Jerusalem, where there was no Baal worship, where a religious revival and reformation had taken place, yet exclaims, "*Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination to me. Your new moons and your Sabbaths my soul hateth. I am weary to bear them. Cease to do evil. Learn to do well.*" Each is a stern moralist; each is a witness of evils that are destroying a nation. The question between Baal and Jehovah was the question between a God of Power and a God of Righteousness. That was the question which was also at issue between Isaiah and those who were keeping the new moons and the Sabbaths in the days of Hezekiah. It was not a God who sought to deliver His creatures from doing evil, who was teaching them to do well, that these religious people were seeking after. They, as much as the servants of Ahab's

court, were bowing down to a Being who they hoped would excuse them from doing well, would allow them to do ill, if they paid Him sufficient court and homage. And this again was John's contention with the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians of his generation. Their religion needed to be shaken, not to be cultivated. It was concealing, not uprooting their moral corruptions. It was giving a sanction to the social evils under which the nation was crumbling. It was hastening on that divine wrath and vengeance which would lay the holy city and the Temple in ruins. But it had not accomplished its purpose of banishing God from His own world. He was still speaking to men, in His own clear, mighty voice, however confused and false might be the cries which they sent up to Him. He was still fighting with sin, if they were persuading Him to overlook it and tolerate it. He was still turning men from the sin in which they had been lost and buried, to Himself. He was still making the conscience free from that burden which He had taught it to groan under and to confess. He was preparing the perfect manifestation of His own nature, which should also be the manifestation of His relation to men, and of His victory over evil.

John's voice in the Wilderness was like the voice of every previous prophet, who had said, "*Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God;*" who had said, "*The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, but*

the Word of our God shall stand for ever;" who had said to the cities of Judah, "*Behold your God!*" But John's voice was clearer, stronger, than that of all who had gone before. He gathered their utterances into one simple, grand utterance, that could reach to all corners of that land, and at last of all lands; that met the wants of his own time; that would meet the wants of all human beings in generations to come. He interpreted the past by the present; he showed how the future would be the interpreter of both. He made it evident that in one period or another a Living God, the same yesterday, today, and for ever, must be the Reformer and Restorer of nations and of human society,—that no system, political, philosophical, religious, ever can be. *Among them that are born of women,* none ever had spoken more directly the word of God to the heart of men; none had ever unfolded the purpose of God more completely: who then could be greater than he?

III. "*Notwithstanding,*" our Lord adds, "*he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven* is *greater than he.*" The Baptism of Repentance wound up the old world. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost introduced the new world.

John's Baptism spoke of an age in which men were regarded as servants of God, but only *as born of women.* The new Baptism spoke of an age in which men were regarded as sons of God, in the only-begotten Son. The first Baptism declared that the King-

dom of Heaven was near, and was about to declare itself. The second Baptism admitted men into it. The first was in the name of the God of Abraham, and Moses, and David,—of the Divine Root, and Lawgiver, and King of Israel. The second Baptism was in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—that which was to join in one all the families of the earth. What our Lord tells us is, that the least in His Kingdom of Heaven, the least who is sealed with His Name, is greater than the greatest Prophet of the earlier world.

You will see that if John's words were true,—if he was the herald of a Baptism far diviner than his own,—it must needs be so. His witness and influence depended upon nothing in himself: they were strongest the more weak he was,—the more their power was felt to be God's, and not his. Because that could not be felt entirely by his disciples, because his voice still sounded as if it rose from the earth, not as if it came from Heaven; he must decrease, that One who spoke *only* the words of God, manifested *only* the life of God, might increase, and might fill the whole space which he and the earlier prophets had partially and by turns occupied. But the Divine Prophet could not be felt to fill that space—to fill all things—to be the perfect Son, till He had gone away. Then, when His Father had revealed Him, and He had revealed the Father,—when the Spirit had come in whom they are united, who reveals them to men, who knits

together the hearts of men that they may receive the Revelation,—then would God indeed be all in all, men would be the living voluntary members and instruments of that body through which He acts and speaks. For a man to be any, even the most insignificant, member of this body,—to know himself as such,—is to have an honour and a knowledge which John whilst he was on earth could not possess, which he died that he might attain.

A very wonderful and very awful recollection, which we need to preserve continually, and to apply in a multitude of different cases. I reminded you last week that all our Sundays, henceforth till Advent, are Sundays after Trinity, and that each is intended to bring out some practical truth which the Mystery involves in reference to our common life. Today I wish to seize one of these truths. We are to be, as John the Baptist was, preachers of Repentance. We are to preach, like him, of a Baptism for the Remission of Sins. We are to preach, like him, of a coming day of the Lord.

And all this the least of us may do, as he could not do it, provided we remember what Baptism we and our hearers have received; provided we have some slight, some growing impression of the Name into which we are baptized. That remembrance and that impression must make us feel as John the Baptist felt —that the position of men brought into covenant and communion with God is a grand one, involving great

responsibilities. Like him, we must exhort men to confess,—we must confess—how little we have remembered, how ill we have acquitted ourselves of, those responsibilities. In encouraging our hearers one and all to this confession, we may know, as surely as John did, that we are speaking as God would have us speak,—that we are speaking His words, not ours. We may be sure, as he was, that we are speaking just the word which men want to hear,—just that which could give them the most unutterable relief if they did hear it and act upon it. But we shall know also what John could know very imperfectly, that every call to Repentance is a message from a Father, coming down to us through a Son, made effectual for us by a Spirit. We shall know that every promise of Remission is the assurance given to the children of a Family through an Elder Brother, who has entered into their sorrows and borne their sins, and bestowed on them a Spirit who can perfectly divide the evil in them from the good. We shall know that the day of the Lord which we are to proclaim is a day that will manifest the God whose One Name is Love, in contrast to all hateful and dividing powers; as a consuming fire which will destroy them and their works. We shall know that to proclaim the Father and the Son, is to lay a foundation for righteousness in fathers, for reverence in children; and that to proclaim the Spirit is to prevent the distinctness of Relations from ever interfering with the oneness of our human Fellowship.

We shall know, lastly, that as John the Baptist forbade Jews to say, 'We have Abraham to our father,' because God was able out of the stones to raise up children to Abraham; so we must forbid ourselves and all Christians to boast of our Baptism and our privileges, seeing that God is able out of the hardest and most hopeless tribes of the earth, to raise up witnesses who shall worship and glorify, with loving and united hearts, the Name which we have often turned into a symbol of Strife and Enmity.

Second Sunday after Trinity.

July 3, 1859.

DEUTERONOMY VII. 21.

"THOU SHALT NOT BE AFFRIGHTED AT THEM; FOR THE LORD THY GOD IS AMONG YOU, A MIGHTY GOD AND A TERRIBLE."

THE complaint has been made often, and has been made recently with much force, that the qualities which Christians are especially encouraged to cultivate, are not manliness and courage; that so far as the Christian ideal is set continually and steadfastly before the mind of a nation or of a man, that mind is likely to become submissive, not energetic. There is much apparent evidence in favour of this opinion. The old Saxon strength in our own land certainly dwindled and decayed after it had been for some time subject to a sacerdotal culture: when it was revived by the assaults of unsparing enemies, much of the ancient Paganism reappeared in the habits of the people and in their literature. 'How,' it has been said, 'has that 'Saxon strength been preserved in our sons? Those of 'the upper classes are nourished upon heathen books. 'Homer has at least as much share in their training as

'the Sermon on the Mount. Rough and even brutal 'sports were, at least till in a very late time, cherished 'among our lower people. Are we sure that if a change 'were effected under more directly Christian influences 'in either of these cases, we should not feel the effects, 'supposing resistance to an invader were demanded of 'us as of other nations?'

I. I cannot answer these questions, as some might, by pleading that courage belongs to the old man; that what we want of that, the world will give us; that the tempers of mind which the Church is to busy herself in producing are those which contradict our natural tendencies, and which are commonly scorned. I cannot speak so, because I do not find that courage, like the appetite for food, developes itself of course, if nothing is done to call it forth. I find, on the contrary, that my natural inclinations readily co-operate with any discipline which is directed to the purpose of crushing courage. Let any one of us aim at the repression of the energies which men have admired as heroic; he will have a seconder in himself, and in nearly every person upon whom he makes the experiment. Now and then he will find a stout unbending will which defies his efforts; what *he* does for such a will,—what comes of it hereafter,—let him ponder seriously; but in an immense majority of cases the policy will succeed. If heathenism means courage, if Christianity means the absence of it, the conversion from one to the other will not encounter many

of those obstacles which the Apostles had to struggle with when they preached the gospel to the effeminized Greeks and Asiatics of the age of Claudius and Nero. I believe that the courage—which, as the etymology indicates, is only another way of expressing the *heart*—of a nation is liable to a continual weakening and decay; that left to itself it will certainly wither; that some religion may hasten its death; but that by doing so such religion will prove that it does not come from God, that it is not His religion, not His instrument for reforming and regenerating the world.

II. But why then has the doctrine gained such currency, that courage is the quality of savages? A question surely to be asked, because every authentic record which we possess of savages would appear to demonstrate that they are *not* courageous; that a host of them will quail, not before the mechanical arts, but before the deliberate valour of a few civilized men. But because we perceive in them many of the instincts of wild animals, mixed with some of the higher and nobler instincts of men; because under our culture the former are kept down, if not extinguished, and the latter very little awakened; and because in these circumstances they lose the force which we found terrible at first, and perhaps die out from inanition, or from the diseases which we communicate to them; we talk of civilization as if it destroyed their energy and courage. What a lesson might this very ex-

perience teach us about the nature of Courage! It belongs to the spirit; the animal has the mere force which it is meant to direct and quicken. That force you can quickly triumph over when it is alone; that force will perish, if it is merely brought into collision with what ought to be its master; that force you might sustain and complete, if you cared to do God's work in the world rather than your own.

III. But from the mere observation of this fact without any serious reflection upon it, another error has arisen. We conclude that the brutal as well as the savage is allied to the courageous. Here is the justification for the cruel sports which we are sometimes told would cease of themselves if they were not encouraged for the sake of keeping alive the martial ardour of a people. Supposing that to be the object which the promoters of such entertainments have aimed at, they have failed signally. Gladiatorial exhibitions availed nothing to prevent the decay of native Roman strength—to avert the necessity of sustaining the empire by mercenaries. Spanish bull-fights have been more and more popular as the nation has become more emasculated. The increase of the appetite for such spectacles may almost be taken as a measure of the decrease of the valour of those who delight in them. They feed themselves with exhibitions of strength, that they may not be too painfully conscious how it is perishing within them. The glee with which they behold the sufferings of a

victim which cannot injure them, shows how little they are prepared for any actual conflict with those who can. The case was not far different in many English amusements in which the inferior animals were the actors and the sufferers. These *could* not prepare human beings to struggle or to endure. It was different, no doubt, when men themselves were the fighters, and the spectators insisted that there should be equality between them. But the baseness of gambling soon came in to show how much less these sights were likely to fit men for withstanding an actual assault upon their hearths and homes, than for being the sackers and plunderers of cities. The courage of English troops had had another root, a more healthful training, than this.

IV. A return to the old faith that *courage* and *humanity* are not enemies but inseparable companions, has certainly commenced among us. The misfortune is that Christianity is supposed to be not identical with humanity, but a substitution for it. And this opinion is closely connected with that other to which I alluded, that courage is a heathen—or perhaps *the* heathen—virtue, and that we have cherished it by giving our children a semi-heathen education. Let us consider this opinion under different aspects.

V. By a heathen we may mean one who is not a Jew. That is the simplest, most accurate use of the name. Taking it in this sense, the text which I have read to you is decisive that a high estimate of courage was

not confined to heathens; that if to form such an estimate is ungodly, the chosen people were as ungodly as any. And the text is a specimen of the book from which it is drawn. I do not know whether we could describe that book better than by saying that it is a series of lessons as to the processes by which the Israelites might become a cowardly, weak, contemptible people,—as to the processes by which they might become a courageous people, able to resist their enemies, honoured by the countries round about. And what especially deserves your notice is, idolatry is said to be the great destroyer of courage; reverence for the true God, and an abiding sense of His presence and protection, the upholder of it.

How is that doctrine compatible with the fact—for I fully admit it to be the fact—that the most illustrious of the heathen nations were signally brave nations, and that our forefathers sought to kindle English courage at their fires? It is incompatible, if you regard a heathen *merely* as an idolater. It is perfectly compatible, if we trace through the history of the great nations which worshiped idols a continual fight with idolatry, a continual witness against it. For we shall discover their belief in courage, as a quality which raised them above the animals, to be the greatest of all the protests which the conscience of heathens was bearing against idolatry—against the worship of visible things, which is directly connected with our animal instincts, which is always lowering the human

being to the level of that which he should rule. So far as any man strove to be courageous, so far he strove against those impulses which made him an idolater. Who imparted to him that high desire, who sustained him in that strife, we shall determine according as we believe or disbelieve that God is the Author and Giver of every good thing,—according as we refer what is right in man to himself or to his Creator. I do not at all suppose—the contrary fact is notorious—that the bravest heathen will have ceased to be a worshiper according to his country's rites. He may have been a more devout worshiper; but he will unquestionably have been less of an idolater. He will have recognized in the object of his worship one to whom his spirit could look up for strength; not an image of himself, or of that which was below himself. That there will have been great contradictions in his mind no one disputes. The greatest of all will have been the tendency to glorify the strength or courage in himself; to think that it set him above men and gods. Because there was the continual peril of this self-glorification, we have rashly concluded that the virtue which Heathens accounted so precious is a self-glorifying one; whereas in them, as in all other men, it was strongest when it was least conscious of its own exercises or its own worth. If it began to vaunt itself, it soon became the abettor of tyranny, passed into the mere delight in dominion, ended often in utter weakness.

VI. Courage, then, must be at all events an Old Testament virtue. Before we decide that the difference between the Old and the New Testament is that what was deemed precious under the one became vile under the other, let us consider on what grounds Moses rests the command to be courageous, and how he tells us that it may be obeyed. "*Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God and a terrible.*" In the presence of their enemies this belief was to be their one strength and confidence. But if they were to profit by it in the hour of peril, it must have been wrought into their hearts by various processes before; it must have become an habitual conviction. "*The Lord is among you.*" 'He whom all creatures in heaven and earth 'obey; He who was, and is, and will be, the I AM, the 'Lord *thy* God; He who has taken you into covenant 'with Him, the God of your fathers; He who loved 'you and chose you when ye were the fewest of all 'people to be a people of inheritance to himself; He 'who has made you a nation,—He is with you. The 'Lord *thy* God,—not of the whole nation only, but 'cause of the whole nation, therefore of every parti-'cular Israelite. Thou individually, in whatever rank 'thou mayest be placed, however seemingly lost in the 'crowd, art to remember that He is thy God,—thine, 'the Author of thy life, the source of thine energies, 'the protector of thy wife and children. Thine;—'though no other man in the host should recollect

'Him, that Lord thy God is among you; unseen as 'He was when His voice was heard at Sinai, but 'really here as there; not afar off in some immea- 'surably distant world; near to the united army, near 'to each man in it, speaking to the heart of the 'leader, speaking to the heart of every follower, bid- 'ding all and each one go forward in His name, as 'His minister, to do His will. He is among you, a 'mighty God and a terrible. Not less mighty than 'in that night when He smote the first-born of Egypt; 'not less terrible than on the day when not a beast 'might touch the mountain.'

VII. The courage of the Hebrew was derived from his trust in this Being, who had chosen him to do His work in the world; who would accomplish that work, let what powers would, unite to defeat it. Is that trust set at nought by the revelation in Christ? Does that proclaim to Jew or to Gentile that God is not their God? Did the Immanuel, God with us, take our flesh upon Him that He might show God *not* to be among us? Perhaps you will say that at least He took away those titles of the mighty and the terrible from Him whom He called His Father and our Father. I cannot find that He did. The God of Love whom He revealed is declared to be a consuming fire. *Because* we are not come to the mountain that could be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and tempest, and the sound of words, but to the New Jerusalem, the General Assembly and Church

of the First-born, to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, *therefore* we are to serve God with more of reverence and godly fear. The Gospel shows us the inner mind, the essential nature of Him who was partially declared—declared in His acts and purposes—under the Law. The fuller the revelation, the deeper is the ground of awe; the more is the Divine Majesty a reason for not being affrighted at lower and meaner things, seeing that He the mighty and terrible God is with us, and is our God.

VIII. The truth, it seems to me, is this. Christianity, as our fathers understood it, is not a denial of Judaism or a denial of Heathenism,—a *tertium quid* which excludes all that is strongest and most vital in both,—but the harmony and concentration of both, the discovery of Him in whom the meaning of both is realized and raised to its highest power. The Hebrew faith is faith in a God who is maintaining an incessant war against that which is corrupt, debasing, disorderly in His Creation. The Hebrew courage is the courage of a man who holds himself called by God to engage in this war, who is acting as His servant in it, who feels that he has nothing else to do but to take the place in the host which God has assigned him, and to fight there. The Greek faith is a faith that man exists to assert his supremacy over inanimate things, and over all in himself that

is merely animal. The Greek courage consists in maintaining the battle against whatever chooses to be savage and animal rather than human. And that other form of heathenism, without which the Greek would have been utterly incomplete, and before which it at last fell,—the Roman,—was a faith in the power of human order to vanquish whatever is disorderly; a faith producing a marvellous courage, not superseding but upholding a marvellous discipline. The Hebrew faith sank into the exclusiveness of the later Jew, and lost its own proper nature, when the choice and purpose of God was set up in opposition to the freedom and unity of mankind, not as leading to that freedom and unity. The Hebrew courage, divorced from that faith, allied to that exclusiveness, became a mere wild, incoherent resolution to retain privileges on which God had pronounced His doom. The Greek faith sank into the mere idolatry or the mere philosophy of the later time, and lost all that had been elevating in it, when the belief in man's power was separated from the belief in a Divine inspiration of that power. The Greek courage, divorced from that faith, based only upon a confidence in intellectual craft and prowess, became the cunning and revenge of the slave. The Roman faith sank into a mere reverence for organization, and for the man who could organize, when the God of Order was thought to exist only that Rome might be the mistress of the Universe. The Roman courage, separated from that

faith, became a mechanical courage, resting on machinery, sure to be overpowered by the real courage of tribes without any machinery, but alive and young. The Gospel restored and renovated the Hebrew faith, by proclaiming a God who is determined to set Righteousness and Truth in the earth, a God who gives up His only-begotten Son to fight hand to hand with all the forms of evil by which man is tormented, at last to set His face as a flint for a conflict with death and the unseen world and every power that had distracted and disturbed the peace of the Universe. The divine Man is the Servant, to do the will and execute the purposes of the everlasting God. But the Man is the *willing* servant because He is the Son. He enters into the mind of His Father. He trusts Him because He knows Him. And therefore this Hebrew faith could not be renovated without pouring a new life into the Greek faith in the dignity and glory of man, a new life into the Roman faith in an Order Divine and human which must overcome all disorder. And out of this union and reconciliation of apparent opposites in the faith of a Father and a Son, and of a Spirit proceeding from both, to quicken men and make them the voluntary, cheerful servants—because the sons—of God —there must come forth a Courage diviner than the Hebrew, more human than the Greek, more pledged to a continual battle with disorder than the Roman.

XI. I say, such a Courage *must* come, and such a

Courage did come. But because it took the wonderful form of endurance and self-sacrifice, it has been said to be passive, and not energetic,—submissive, not assertive. It was in the highest degree energetic, a vital power within overcoming all natural weakness and cowardice. It was in the highest degree assertive, for the most insignificant of the earth dared to say that they knew what God willed for men and what He had done for men, though the powers of the world and the traditions of centuries told them they were liars. And let it be always remembered that though the courage of the Martyr was, in one sense, purely spiritual—as, indeed, all courage, whether it is exerted at the stake or amidst bayonets, must be—in another sense it was a witness for the dignity and the permanence of the body. Without in the least exaggerating the sufferings of those who were put to death, or supposing them to have been greater than those of an ordinary sick bed, still we may confidently affirm that no gnostical opinion, no belief in a fantastic resurrection, made them endurable. The early Christian held fast by the faith that his Lord, the Son of God, had broken in an actual body through the gates of the grave,—was in an actual body at the right-hand of His Father. Such a faith, if it dwelt at first oftener in men with feeble, attenuated forms, could afterwards quicken the Goth with his stout animal nature,—could awaken, not crush the powers of that nature,—could support a

fight with it which should have the ascendant. These were in fact the very bottles into which the new wine of the Gospel was to be poured; when the Greek and Latin civilization was dying because the courage that had been at the root of it was dead, among these was the Church to be the source of a new and better civilization.

X. Why has the Church failed so much in accomplishing this task? Why has rough, animal barbarism mixed strangely and confusedly with an effeminate religion, opposing it, refusing to penetrate it? Because Churchmen have thought they were glorifying their faith, by severing it from the course of God's government; because they have changed it from His faith into theirs. St. John says that Christ has made kings and priests to God and his Father. 'Not kings,' say the sacerdotal moralists, 'only priests. We are 'not to rule and reign,—that was a Hebrew or heath-'enish notion,—only to offer sacrifices, for that Christ 'did.' What comes of this denial? We become neither kings nor priests. A certain set of men offer sacrifices for us, and rule for us. We do not understand the office of either, because we do not understand our own; least of all do we understand His office who is King and Priest for ever,—who offered Himself to God that He might establish His kingdom, and that men might dwell with Him in that kingdom. The royalty of our race has been as much vindicated by Christ's death and resurrection as its hu-

miliation. The rights of the spirit and of the body have been both maintained by His sacrifice, and by the acceptance of it. He has shown that those only can maintain the dignity of their kind who are willing to surrender themselves; that only those *can* surrender themselves, who are resolved not to surrender a jot of that which belongs to their proper manhood,—to that which Christ has redeemed and united to Himself.

Brethren, I have been speaking to you again today of one of the principles which are involved in the confession we made two Sundays ago. I wished you then to feel how that confession united the divine teaching of the Israelite with the witness for a divine humanity which was so strong in the minds of the other nations; how it saved the one from passing into the worship of a distant, inapproachable God,—the other, from being an exaltation and deification of the works of God's hands, yes, and of men's hands. How that practical morality which refers to the repentance and reformation of conscious wrong-doers, is connected with the belief in a Father and Son and Spirit, I tried to show you last Sunday. How that practical morality which refers to the cultivation of courage in thought, word, and act, in the business of every man's daily life,—in the defence of nations,—may be strengthened by this same belief, I have wished you to consider this afternoon. You have thought that the lessons you learnt at school respecting the virtue of courage, were heathen, not Chris-

tian lessons. Brethren, it was your own fault if you made them so, or if you allow them to be so now. You were studying witnesses which God raised up in heathen nations to testify of a quality which was wanted then,—without which the nations would have perished then; which is wanted now,—without which the nations must perish now. We need these testimonies, we cannot dispense with them; we shall contradict God's Word if we say that what they have told us on this subject was false. They told us that it was a God who put vigour and health into any hero who was able to do great deeds. They were right,—they must have been right. It is yours to know who that God is; *what* courage He would put in you; how He would have you use it. Do not think that these questions are needless for any of us. There is a temptation in all Teutonic people to fancy they have courage as a natural endowment; they are insulted if they are told that there is any cowardice in them. It is an insult which we must all bear,—which we must put upon ourselves if others do not put it upon us. Courage is *not* natural to us; it does not come through fortune, or the accident of being born in a certain locality, or because we have the blessing of being descended from brave men. A thousand motives tempt us to cowardice in little things; we are afraid to speak the truth just as it is; we are afraid to tell our friends when we know that they are wrong; we are afraid to assert what we know to be

right. We court public opinion, private opinion. Self-indulgence takes away our nerve; and, what is more than our nerve, our heart. A cold indifference creeps over us; we ask what there is which is worth while to live or to die for. These are bad symptoms in a man,—terrible symptoms in a nation. We can part with no aid, past or present, in the effort to overcome them. We want to admire more, not less, than we have done, the Homeric hero, the stern Roman patriot, the knight of the Middle Ages. We require more than ever the help of the old Hebrew seer. We want him to ring in our ears continually, "*Thou shalt not be affrighted at them, for the Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God, and a terrible.*" But we shall only hear and understand that voice if we hear also the prayer of the Apostle, and join in it: "*For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He will grant you to be strengthened by might with His Spirit in the inner man.*" That Spirit is the true source of the courage which is gentle, because it is stern and unbending; able to endure all things, because it is intolerant of evil; essentially human, because it is essentially divine.

Third Sunday after Trinity.

July 10, 1859.

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1 Samuel iii. 9.

"IT SHALL BE, IF HE CALL THEE, THAT THOU SHALT SAY, SPEAK, LORD; FOR THY SERVANT HEARETH."

The reader of Scripture, when he meets with a story like that which we heard in the first Lesson this afternoon, often thinks thus with himself: 'I may apply 'this narrative, or the preacher may apply it, to my 'own circumstances. I may feel that God is, *in some* '*sense*, speaking to me as He was to the child Samuel. 'But I must be careful to remember that it is not 'in the same sense. I must beware of fanatical im-'pressions. On the other hand, I must not get rid 'of the plain letter; Samuel, we are told, heard an 'actual voice. To doubt that he did is to doubt inspi-'ration; to remould the whole record according to 'our notions.' There is evidently an honest purpose in this resolution; a wish to profit by the lessons of Scripture; a fear of dealing unfairly with them or with our own times. And yet those who adopt this course find themselves in some sad confusions.

I. It has been found impossible seriously to care for these so-called applications of Scripture. What are they? What force lies in them? They are merely so many morals appended with more or less ingenuity to the text. They are worth just as much, and just as little, as any other comments upon human conduct and exhortations to human duties. They are seemingly founded on the Bible, but really are deduced from our own observation and experience by the use of our own logical faculty. When we demand for them the reverence which is paid to Scripture, the conscience of our hearers rebels against the claim. They feel that one has only the most artificial accidental connection with the other. And we preachers feel it too. The more homage we pay in our hearts to Scripture, the more we are conscious how wholly different from it these forced deductions, moralizations, spiritualizations of ours are; we know we have no right to press them as if they had any authority; we grow languid in the utterance of them; they become at every step more dull, flat, and unprofitable.

II. There are two methods of escape from such a state of things; our age has tried, or is trying, both. One is, to surround ourselves with sensible images and impressions. 'The men in the old time,' it is said, 'believed that the spiritual world actually held 'converse with this world. Voices reached them, 'visions came to them, which are denied to us. They

'were surrounded with a religious atmosphere; the 'circumstances in which they dwelt kindled instead 'of repressing their faith. All was mystery; why 'should not mysterious communications be made to 'them from time to time?' It is insinuated, scarcely asserted, that a similar discipline would produce similar effects. Men cured of the indisposition to believe in miracles may become the subjects of miraculous agency. At all events they will be in a condition to understand those who were the subjects of it in other days,—to sympathize with them, to take their reports literally. This is one process.

The other is directly the reverse of this. It affirms that the great art of the modern student is to strip off the material husk which encased the spiritual records of the old time. 'A kernel,' it is said, 'there 'is in them, which we may possess; for it belongs to 'one century as much as another. The facts—the 'wonderful facts—of Conscience,—the spiritual in-'stincts, which exist in the infancy of the world, but 'become clearer and more definite as it advances,—'these,' it is said, 'were hidden under certain forms 'of expression, betokening the period in which they 'were first observed and treasured up. We may ge-'nerally remove the sensible covering without greatly 'damaging the substance within; what then presents 'itself we may gladly receive; it will be the counter-'part of experiences through which we have ourselves 'passed.'

III. Each of these opposing methods aims at restoring our sympathy with the narratives of Scripture; each therefore assumes that the sympathy has been disturbed. Sceptical onlookers avail themselves of that confession. 'You have not courage,' they say, 'to 'declare in plain words that we have outgrown these 'old Hebrew traditions; yet you feel that they stand 'hopelessly apart from us. So you have no resource 'but to unlearn all that we have been acquiring in 'centuries of hard experience, to create a fancy world 'in the midst of our real world; or else to impute a 'high and philosophical meaning to that which was 'obviously gross and materialistic. Such romancing 'might be worth something if it were new. But it 'has been tried on a grand scale, by able men, and 'it has failed ignominiously. The Neo-Platonists of 'the Roman Empire strove to do with the fables of 'Heathenism precisely what you are striving to do 'with Christianity. They anticipated both your plans. 'They tried to create a supernatural thaumaturgic 'machinery around them. They deduced the sub-'limest philosophical maxims and principles from the 'old Mythology. They had the good wishes of the 'old Pagan devotees; once, at least, a passionate 'royal disciple was willing to give them the most 'cordial help out of the resources of his intellect and 'his exchequer. But the Romancers could not pre-'vail; Reality was too strong for them.'

IV. I believe, my brethren, that such criticism as

this, however painful, may be very profitable to us. If we are romancing, by all means let us thank God for any witnesses of any kind that may be raised up to warn us of so fatal a disease. And it does threaten us. Stern reality is not pleasant to us. We had rather see ourselves, Eternity, God, in pictures; rather contemplate them in a dim past, a dimmer future, than confess them to be at hand. We shrink from saying, '*This* is none other than the house of God; *this* is the gate of Heaven.' Those infidels are preachers of mighty worth who show us that it is so. The more gratefully we listen to them when they expose us and ridicule us for this inconsistency, the less we shall be likely to accept the alternative which they offer us. If we did, we should become Romancers altogether; we should part with reality, and should experience no remorse for deserting it. Facts which our consciences recognize as the deepest we should be obliged to explain away, that we might not violate the philosophical conventions of the nineteenth century, the fictions which they hold to be sacred. We should have generalizations for facts; shadows for persons; for a belief of that which is, a dream of that which may be. We know that they have hearts and spirits even as we have, which crave for actual food, which the bare imagination of a feast will never satisfy. The work they are permitted to do in the world is to make men impatient of the miserable substitutes for the bread of life which we

have offered them. Their scorn may be as effectual as the sword of any Sennacherib or Nebuchadnezzar for punishing hypocritical worshipers, for destroying that which can be destroyed. And like the swords, the scorn will soon become rusty; will be itself the object of scorn to a newer generation of scoffers, destined to perform the like work with the like result.

V. Upon some of us the part of this ridicule which was best deserved has produced this effect. It has led us to ask whether the Scriptures, which seem to simple people so very real, may not have been obscured by our affectations,—whether we may not have introduced into them the materialism which we impute to them? One commonplace at least we are bound to recollect. We call the Hebrew narrow and exclusive. In what did his narrowness and exclusiveness consist? Surely he differed from all other nations in that he was a protestant against all visible, all material likenesses of the Unseen Being. He must not dare—that dull infantine Jew of the times of Moses and of Samuel—to think of the Godhead as like anything that he could see, even though it was the most glorious object in creation. Repeat this fact over and over again to yourselves. Remember that this was the characteristic, the notorious, difference between him and the most cultivated, as well as the most barbarous of other nations. Remember that all the minute, rigorous discipline ordained for the Jew and described in these

books, was for the purpose of correcting a tendency, to which he is said to be just as prone as all other men. And then consider whether the most literal interpretation of the story which we have heard concerning Samuel—the one which is most in accordance with the rest of the record—*can* be that which is sensual, materialistic, or, which is another phrase for the same thing, idolatrous. Do not give up so promising and so plausible an accusation as this lightly. Look back to the previous history. The opening of the national story is in the words "God said to Abraham, Get thee out of thy father's house to a land that I will show thee." What effect had this voice on the patriarch? From the time he heard it he ceased to be an idolater. He believed in a God whom he could not see. Every step in his education was a strengthening of this belief. There might be appearances to his eye, voices heard by his outward ear. We have no need to inquire—and we shall not perhaps get an answer if we do inquire—how many of the communications to him had or had not such accompaniments. But he knew, and the historian strives to make us know, that they were but accompaniments; the essential vision was to the inward eye; the real speech was to the inward ear; it was this which gave him strength to believe and to act; it was this which he obeyed. His senses had their own objects; he was reminded continually that all these objects were under the care of the Lord who cared for him; but there was a spirit

awakened in him, a spirit which perceived not flowers and trees, but a Righteous Being,—which took in not the notes of birds or the sounds of waterfalls, but His human lessons.

VI. Every after-revelation must be explained by these, which are the earliest, and will be found in strict harmony with them. Let the child Samuel confound, as it was natural for him to confound, that voice which called him to his prophetical office with the voice of his visible teacher, the high priest of God; let that voice have been an actual one to his bodily ear if you please. Yet it was because *he knew not the Lord* that the mere external sound or impression was what he rested in. When he said, "*Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth,*" another step was taken in his education; the mighty conviction dawned before him, to be the law of his after-life,—the inspiring power of his words and thoughts—that which fitted him to govern, to judge, as well as to exhort and foretell,—that the Eternal Lord was nigh to him, was holding inward, secret, awful converse with him,—was imparting to him and quickening in him all his powers of thought, feeling, utterance,—was the guide and teacher of his people as well as of himself. We have no material shell to break in order to arrive at this discovery; we carry that shell about us; if we take it to the Bible, that will break it for us: we shall find it hard, though, alas, not impossible to preserve our sensualism in the neighbourhood of such close, penetrating, spiritual re-

ality; we shall be forced to corrupt and confuse that with this, if we will not suffer ourselves to be tried, sifted, judged by the book, or rather by that Living Word of whom the book is the witness.

VII. But is not this the story of a child? I should be treating the letter of the narrative very strangely if I said that it was not. It professes to be about a child; everything in the style and manner of it is in accordance with the profession. If there were no children in the nineteenth century as there were in the days of the Judges, or if children now were essentially different from children then, or children in the west from children in the east, that might be a reason why we should take no interest in this passage, or should merely adapt it to our circumstances. But just, it seems to me, what parents want, is to be reminded of those characteristics of their children which do not depend upon locality, or upon the changes of times and seasons. Just what they want to understand are their strange questionings respecting an unseen world and its relation to the unrealized world about them. Just what they need for their children's sake and for their own is, that they should know how they may be saved at once from the dominion of their senses and their phantasies. These demands the story before us,—if we might take it as it stands, if we might receive it as the witness of a permanent truth,—meets as no other meets it. If there was a teacher near Samuel, if there is one near every child now, who is

speaking to it, though it is slow in distinguishing the voice, who is preparing it by degrees for the work which it is to do in the world, what can be more important than for us to be aware of that fact! *What* a fact it must be for all our discipline, for all their profiting! What a key to innumerable puzzles, for which we invent cumbrous and unsatisfactory solutions, would this be! What an encouragement to hope in what we may do; what a cause of repentance for what we have left undone!

VIII. And how would this belief link together the different portions of human life in natural piety; taking from us all those indevout regrets which we sometimes feel and express when the grace, and, as we sometimes say, the innocence, of childhood—disturbed though it be with many rebellions—gives way to the more passionate period of boyhood or girlhood? Such growth, untended and unwatched except by the eyes of human guardians,—who fear oftentimes where no fear is, who overlook dangers that are imminent, even cause them by ill-directed vigilance,—would always appear to be a growth into evil. How dare we think it so, if we hold that He who fed the morning lamp with gladness is present in every step of after-trial, is using the very occasions of evil-doing without, even the traitors within the camp, as His ministers to call forth the faculty which discriminates right and wrong,—the energy which rejects the wrong and chooses the right? Not to doubt that amidst failures and falls, by the

shame and humiliation which they beget, even amidst a course of reckless folly, there is this ever-present Friend, Reprover, Judge, pointing out the sin behind, the peril before, hedging up the path, making retreat and advance look equally hopeless, that He may awaken the cry, 'Help me!' 'Undertake for me!' 'Thou knowest my path that I have lost it!'—oh, brethren, what would not this assurance be to us when we are utterly downcast about those for whom we care most, convinced that we at least may hurt, rather than help them?

And surely it is thus that the thought, 'The child is father of the man,' ceases to be a thought of anguish, and becomes one of thanksgiving. The recollection how in early years, by neglect of loving expostulations and encouragements, by indulgence of evil imaginations, by self-conceit, by opportunities wasted that could never return, by refusing to let the blessed seeds take root which might have borne fruit sixty or an hundredfold, we were preparing a store of weakness and heartlessness for the conflicts of manhood,—how appalling, sometimes how overwhelming, is this! But is there nothing to mingle with it and sustain it? If we had ever been deserted by the Counsellor and Inspirer of Good, if He had ever given up the house to the powers of evil that would have inhabited it and possessed it wholly, these shameful remembrances would not be, the past would be merely a blank as well as the present. 'Strong Son of God,' Word of

the Father, Thou who didst speak to the child that lay in the couch within Thy Temple when the lamp was going out,—Thou hast been with us in all these wild plans, idle speculations, purposeless acts, from which all childish simplicity was banished, but which had acquired, in compensation, no manly freedom and steadfastness. Thou wast compelling us to look our folly in the face, when we would fain have persuaded ourselves that we were wise. Thou hast shown us our lovelessness and untruthfulness, when we would gladly have consoled ourselves by declaiming against the lovelessness and untruthfulness of our neighbours. Thou hast shown us the need of our casting off the slough of our old nature. Thou hast shown us that what we need is possible, seeing that Thou hast provided us with a new and glorious nature, even with Thine own, with which we may clothe ourselves by believing in Thee. Thou hast told us of a Father whom we may call ours, because he is Thine. Thou hast promised us a Spirit to dwell with us, who shall open to us the mysteries of His love and Thine.

X. "*Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth,*" was the answer of the boy Samuel to that divine Teacher who revealed Himself to him. Have five thousand years discovered any better formula than that, for the child, the boy, the man? We do not want—we do not indeed—applications and adaptations of the story to modern use; the more complicated the experiences of the world are, the more they throw us back upon this cry;

the more need have we to pour it forth, lest the human life within us should be absolutely extinguished by the circumstances and wants which ought to be its nourishment. Still less do we need to gather about ourselves a set of sensible images, that may make supernatural agencies less incredible to us. The supernatural agency is required to withstand the pressure of the sensible images that are already too much for us. We need prayers and Sacraments, as witnesses that God will not let us be the victims and slaves of Nature. Faith in Him is to be the daily abiding protection against that pursuit of rarities and novelties, which dealers in miracles and enchantments seek to promote in us. Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth; oh, suffer me not to mistake the voices with which Thy love has filled the world, even the voices of Thy most consecrated servants, for Thine!

XI. This last remark leads me to notice one peculiarity in the story of Samuel, which ought not to be quite overlooked by those philosophers who say that it must be stripped of its sacerdotal vesture and dressed afresh before it can be presented in our society. The voice which called the boy Samuel designated him to be a witness against the formality and corruption of priests. By that voice an order of men was inaugurated which had this for its especial function. I conceive that that function has never become obsolete. We may do our utmost to restrict the name Prophet to him who bears it in the Old Testament; but the

custom of every age and the conviction of mankind are too strong for our purpose. In countries where the reverence for the Bible is greatest—as the effect of that reverence—men will feel that some are called to be prophets, in the strictest and the most enlarged sense of that word. If it means one who speaks the word of the Lord, it becomes identified—and the New Testament sanctions the identification—with the preacher; if it means one who looks into the future, it is felt that the truest man, the one who most claims the glory of a man as a creature looking before and after, must exercise a gift of prophecy. Either on the plea that they have a special knowledge which others do not possess,—a knowledge derived from Scripture or from intuition,—or on the ground that all men ought to know the signs of the times in which they are living, a number of men will foretell, and a number of other men will listen to their foretelling, and will believe it. You may deride their pretences, but you cannot silence them, or hinder them from making a mighty impression, not only upon ignorant, but often upon very acute, minds. For those who believe the story we have read this afternoon, who accept it as it stands, a better course is open than that of ridicule. They will acknowledge that He who of old enabled Samuel to hear His voice, is the same now as He was then; that now, as then, we speak true words only so far as we speak His words; that now, as then, we speak His words the more distinctly, the more we dread all

the fanatical and superstitious mixtures with them which are the produce of our own vanity; the more we desire Him to separate the dross from the pure ore. To such as seek Him reverently, of whatever class or age they be, something, I believe, of the gift of foresight will be vouchsafed; most of it to those who are most childlike and suspicious of themselves; who depend the least upon any guesses or calculations of theirs, who most read the future in the past, who most look upon all acts that are done upon earth as the acts of a righteous God, who most anticipate His triumph over all that is unrighteous. To such let us listen, not in dependence upon their sagacity and judgment, which will fail continually, but upon Him whose wisdom, and not their own, they wish to see established,—whose will, and not their own, they wish to see done. Prophets we shall name them, as men have always done; not in disparagement, but in honour, of those whom God first called by that name, and made and still makes the interpreters of it to others. We shall find in these ancient seers no superstition, which later science desires to be rid of. Rather we shall find them witnesses for Eternal Truth, and against the several counterfeits of it which science craves. We shall find them no pleaders for any priestly abuse or pious fraud; rather a continual assurance that God is Himself present in all events that befall nations or individuals; is manifestling Himself as the avenger of all injustice and wrong which is

perpetrated in His name; is Himself the giver of all good gifts, the author and inspirer of all the desires and hopes which men can cherish,—of all the true petitions and sacrifices that are presented to Him. When the priest fancies that his oblation has some virtue of its own, he soon becomes, like Eli's sons, profane and foul. Then God raises up some prophet to declare that the Ark of the Covenant, the offering on the Altar, the title of the Priest, the seat of the Judge, the throne of the King, are all His; that He putteth down one and setteth up another; that He means to establish Righteousness on the earth; that His Name shall be hallowed and His Kingdom shall come. Blessed is that man who, when God calls him by one token or another to utter his message, confers not with flesh and blood. Blessed are those who, when God is uttering His voice through events that befall other nations or themselves, seek not for the interpretation of it to wizards that peep and mutter, but cry in penitence and reverence, "*Speak, Lord, Thy servants hear.*"

Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

(MORNING.)

July 17, 1859.

ROMANS VIII. 23.

"WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION, TO WIT, THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY."

THAT the passage which has been chosen for the Epistle today is a magnificent one, few probably would deny. The complaint we are likely to make of it is that it is *too* magnificent; that it transports us out of the highway of ordinary existence into an atmosphere which scarcely any one but a Saint or Apostle can be expected to breathe. We are inclined to ask for a divinity more level to our wants and sins; we need, we think, not grand anticipations of a future for mankind and for the earth, but some help in combating the petty temptations of each day.

Such are likely to be the first impressions which we receive from St. Paul's words. If we look at them again, we perceive that the man who wrote them must have been more, not less, conversant than we are with

the sufferings which common men are experiencing. He had certainly shut himself in no cloister. He had taken no pains to banish those images which might disturb the evenness of his temper or the serenity of his devotion. He has the sense of an incubus sitting heavily upon himself and upon the Universe. What he hears arising from all creation is not an hosanna of rapture, but a groan for deliverance. Evidently this groan is not some general, vague aspiration after a possible felicity. It comes from the sense of actual misery; it is composed of the separate cries of millions of beings of his own flesh and blood. And whatever else may call forth their cries—whatever deep, unsatisfied yearnings may be in them—it is evident that physical anguish is, in the Apostle's judgment, a main cause and justification of them. Men's bodies are subject to a torment and bondage in which they cannot acquiesce; a redemption from this bondage is that which he believes they want,—which he encourages them to hope for.

May it not, then, be an utter mistake that we need some other circumstances than those in which we find ourselves to realize the force of the sentences we have been reading? May not the clearest, fullest interpretation of them be found in our daily walks? May not the streets of London tell us more about the sense of them than all the folios of commentators?

I. There is, indeed, one word in the text—and on that word all the rest depend—which St. Paul him-

self must explain to us, before we consider what illustration it gains from ordinary experience. He tells the Roman Church that he and they were waiting for their adoption, or their full recognition as sons of God. He had said that the message he was delivering to the world was a message concerning One who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection of the dead. He had been showing in all the succeeding passages of the letter how the announcement of such a Person was a Gospel to mankind—to the Gentile as much as to the Jew. He had shown how unable the one was to do what his conscience bade him do, to be what his conscience told him he was meant to be; how the written law of the other only discovered to him more clearly the same inability, made him aware of a deeper sin; how God, sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and condemning sin in the flesh, had done that for men which they could never do for themselves; how He had justified one part of the race as much as the other, by raising His Son from the dead, who had taken the nature of all; how He had given them His Spirit, that they might call Him their Father, and that they might live new and free lives, willing and doing the things which He was working in them to will and to do.

This is the doctrine of all his Epistles. It is not more characteristic of that to the Romans than of

that to the Galatians or the Ephesians or the Colossians. It is the doctrine which lies at the foundation of the Christian Church throughout the world. So far as there has been such a Church at all, so far there has been a proclamation to men that God has claimed them, without respect of race or previous circumstances, as His children in His only-begotten Son; so far there has gone forth an exhortation to them that they would not refuse this dignity; that they would take up their position as spiritual beings, redeemed by the Father of their spirits out of the service of false gods, of visible things, of their own lusts,—consecrated and devoted to His service, which is freedom. And I think we shall find that any message which is less than this, or which takes another form than this, has been powerless to satisfy the necessities of human beings, and has produced no permanent moral effect upon them. If we use all arguments of fear, all arts of rhetoric, to convince beggars or princes that they ought to take care of their souls, a few may be startled out of a sleep to which they will return again. But the more part will feel that you are setting them upon a task which they cannot perform; that you are bidding them think about a mysterious something in them which is itself that which thinks; that you are bidding them forget the real earth for the sake of a heaven which they can only dream of. But if, throwing aside these metaphysics about the soul, we will recur to the old and simple scriptural phraseo-

logy—the phraseology of the hearth and the home—if we will bear witness to men of a Father who has sent the elder Brother of the household to bring them into it, to restore them to the place of sons and daughters, to endow them with the highest rights of children, —if we will condescend to this venerable mode of speech,—we shall find, I believe, that it is not obsolete, that many may despise it in England, as many despised it in Italy or Asia Minor; but that it has a power which time and place have not affected, that it can bring forth as clear a response from the peasant and mechanic of the nineteenth century, as from the peasant and mechanic of the first. The strength is in the tidings themselves, not in the person who delivers them. No gifts which St. Paul or any Apostle possessed could have overcome the palpable evidence which, in his age, seemed to confute his doctrine respecting the glory that Christ had conferred on our race. If we deal as honestly as he did with that evidence,—if we are as resolute as he was not to suppress any facts which lead men to think basely and despairing of themselves,—we shall find that there is a witness mightier than human for our words, as there was for his.

II. The question how this condition of sonship to God is consistent with the bitter sorrow which men are called to endure could be answered, without hesitation, by those who believed *the* Son of God to be the man of sorrows. In the light of Christ's passion

all suffering became transfigured. It was the filial token. To be exempted from it was perilous. "*If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons,*" became the Christian maxim. And strange as that maxim sounded, the conscience of mankind ratified it. The undisciplined did not learn the secret of their parentage; those who smarted under the scourge discovered by slow degrees what hand was guiding it.

But St. Paul had no wish that if they made this discovery they should be contented with it. He did not intend that they should hug pain and sickness, because a deep truth might be learnt from them. He admits them in themselves to be discords and anomalies in creation. He could not bear to contemplate it, if he were not sure that they were no parts of its original order; and that not being parts of it, they were to cease. The revelation of the Son of God in weakness and pain and death, had vindicated the title of sons of God for creatures enduring weakness, pain, and death. The Revelation of the Son of God in the glory of His Father would reveal them in the glory for which they had been created.

III. "*I reckon,*" he says, "*that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.*" We might suppose him to mean, 'I reckon, that no sufferings which I am undergoing for the sake of Christ and His Gospel, are worthy to be compared with the rewards which

God will bestow on me hereafter.' But he does not say this. The words, taken in connection with those which follow, have an altogether different force. The sufferings of the present time are not those of the Apostle Paul, but of the creature Man on earth, —of the whole creation, of which man is the head. He is a partaker in those sufferings; he claims a right to partake in them. To be excluded from them would be to be excluded from human sympathy, from fellowship with the Son of Man, the great Sufferer; from that to which the sufferings are leading. For they are leading, he declares, to an issue. They are travail-pangs; they are prophetic of a second and nobler birth. Turn whithersoever he will, he is met by the sounds and proofs of anguish. The keen sense of it is in himself. So far from being exempt from it, he knows more of it than almost any. The blessing that has been bestowed upon him—what he calls *the first-fruits of the Spirit*,—is the possession of a clearer, stronger hope than others, a hope grounded upon a Revelation of God. That hope is not a hope for himself, but for his kind. That Revelation is a Revelation of God's purpose, not concerning him, not concerning a few believers in Christ who are gathered about him; but concerning that whole travailing world in which he is a dweller.

IV. "*For the creature*," he continues, "*was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected the same.*" Here is the Apostle's ex-

planation of the puzzle which has tormented men ever since physical evil and moral evil entered into the Universe, that was made perfectly good. 'That 'the guilty will be punished,' this, we have said, 'is 'reasonable,—in this our consciences acquiesce. But 'there is a part of Creation which is involuntary, 'which can by no possibility be charged with guilt. 'And yet this also endures misery,—is subject to 'death. What does that mean? How can that be 'just?' The authorized mode of dealing with the subject is to plead ignorance; to say that men cannot estimate what is righteous in God; to say that His justice may be quite different from ours. St. Paul does not adopt this method. He could not adopt it without setting at naught the argument of his Epistle. For the object of it has been to show that God has made known His Righteousness to man,—that man has no righteousness of his own; that he obtains righteousness by trusting in the righteous God. The Apostle's method, therefore, is the very opposite of this. He feels the difficulty which other men feel. He must find a refuge from it for himself, as well as for them. And this is the refuge. He confesses that the Creation has been made subject to vanity; that is the phrase, a very fitting phrase, I apprehend, to express the apparent frustration of the end for which it has been called into existence, the feebleness, failure, mortality which has manifestly passed upon it. He frankly admits the distinction between voluntary crea-

tures and involuntary. He declares that the bondage which the mere animal undergoes is not its own fault. He does not shrink from attributing to it a Divine origin. But in doing so he affirms two mighty propositions. First, that the innocent, involuntary creature is made the victim of vanity and death for the sake of that higher being whose will has gone astray; who has broken loose from that will which he was created to serve. Secondly, that this subjection is temporary, that it contains the promise of a future emancipation, when the end for which it was ordained has been accomplished. "*For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected the same in hope, because* (or *that*) *the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*"

Which language I dare not limit by any poor beggarly interpretations of mine. It may mean immeasurably more than I can think. But less than this it cannot mean; that all the sufferings to which the earth and those that inhabit it are liable, are permitted and designed for the education of those who bear the nature which the Son of God bore; that the redemption of the will, the restoration of those whose state is that of God's children to their true position and inheritance, was that which He sought by His death and resurrection; that this is the highest and grandest of all results, which no force—which

only the mightiest Love—can achieve; that no trial or suffering which contributes to this end is, in the judgment of the All-good and the All-wise, excessive or wasted,—not even the sufferings and death of *the* innocent, *the* Holy One; but that this end being attained, the Son of God having won His final victory, the sons of God having through Him triumphed over the moral evil which has separated them from God and degraded them into animals, while they yet could never attain the unconsciousness of animals;—all the forms of physical evil will also be overcome; the involuntary creation will be delivered from its fetters and its shame; the whole regenerated world, in its primal order and harmony, will offer up its sacrifices, through its High-priest and Restorer, to His Father.

V. I have said that I can put no restriction upon the language of an inspired Apostle. If you ask me whether his teaching, if it be taken fully and literally, does not involve a renewal of the whole animal creation, a redemption of it from vanity and death, I should answer: It certainly appears to contain that assurance. To exclude it, is to make the construing of the passage difficult,—I think, to impoverish the sense. If there is to be a restitution of all things, such as God, who cannot lie, promised by His holy Prophets since the world began, I cannot understand how that element should be wanting to it. And I am sure it would be greatly to the consolation of a number of humble and meek spirits, such as the Kingdom of

Heaven is said to consist of, if they did not suppose that the creatures which have ministered to man's wants and delights, have had a certain fellowship with him,—have reflected some of his qualities,—must miss for ever the perfection of their different natures,—must be shut out from the renovation of our race, though they have been so deeply affected by its degeneracy.

From these thoughts others are nearly inseparable, concerning the order and beauty of the external world. The idea of a Redemption of Nature, as consequent upon a Redemption of Man, has often dawned upon the man of Science and upon the Artist. The one has seen that the laws of the Universe can only be fully vindicated when the self-will which has set those laws at defiance has been extirpated; the other, from his deep sense of the sympathy between man and the forms which he contemplates, has been certain that such a revelation of loveliness awaits the purified vision as the highest Prophet has only guessed of. And both the man of Science and the Artist should surely rejoice that in such a manifestation the wayfarer must participate with them; that vanity and self-glorification once gone, the commonest things will appear the most wonderful; the glory will be about all and for all.

VI. The Redemption of the body which St. Paul waited for, must, I apprehend, include the removal of whatever hinders the senses from receiving clear and

satisfactory impressions of the world with which they are intended to converse,—all which has made them feeble or rebellious ministers of the spirit. But there is, as I have hinted already, a more obvious force in the expression. The body is enslaved to disease and pain. They may have been caused by a more terrible slavery of the man himself to his own appetites and lusts. Or they may be traced to a multitude of circumstances, over which he has no control,—to climate, to ancestors, to education, to poverty. However they have been produced, they are the signs that Death has rights over the body, and that he will assert his rights. St. Paul says that there is another who has an elder, stronger right over it,—that Christ, by going into the grave and rising out of it, has asserted and made good His right; that He will fully exert it; that He will declare the powers of man's body, as well as of man's spirit, to be derived from Him,—that He will quicken that body by His Spirit.

This Redemption St. Paul felt that he was sent to proclaim to men, because he was sent to proclaim their sonship to God,—because he was to declare that this was no idle nominal title, but one which would be proved real at the appearing of Jesus Christ. And so his teaching, even when it rose most above the ordinary aspirations of men, assumed a profoundly practical character. Fully believing in this redemption, men can never succumb to what is called Fate or Necessity. They are never to confess

Death as a master; they are never to give up the battle with all that leads to death. Our homage to Christ, our faith in our Divine sonship, implies that we expect a victory for the wasted, enfeebled, degraded body; that it was not made so fearfully and wonderfully for nothing; that all the powers which God has bestowed upon it He will preserve; that it shall at last be made like to the glorious body of Him who will subdue all to Himself; that it may safely be trusted to Him on the sick-bed, on the battle-field, at the stake. So we know that those who are ministers to it in curing its diseases, or in attempting to ward them off, are ministers of Jesus Christ, and are testifying by deeds, not words, for the work which He came upon earth and has ascended on high to accomplish.

VII. I end with this lesson from the Epistle, because I have wished you to think more of its application to daily life than of its sublimity; or rather to think that the sublimest teaching may be the most homely, that the grandest expectations of the future may most cheer us for the toils and sufferings of the present. Our expectations of the future divide us from the present when they are selfish. We are less fit to endure common griefs, to alleviate the griefs of others, when we are desiring blessings which our fellow-men will not share. Nothing can brace us so much to painful effort, to continual patience, as the hope of a revelation of the Universal Deliverer, of an Emancipator of the whole Creation.

Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

(AFTERNOON.)

July 17, 1859.

ISAIAH LXIV. 1, 2.

"OH THAT THOU WOULDEST REND THE HEAVENS, THAT THOU WOULDEST COME DOWN, THAT THE MOUNTAINS MIGHT FLOW DOWN AT THY PRESENCE, AS WHEN THE MELTING FIRE BURNETH, THE FIRE CAUSETH THE WATERS TO BOIL, TO MAKE THY NAME KNOWN TO THINE ADVERSARIES, THAT THE NATIONS MAY TREMBLE AT THY PRESENCE!"

THIS is nothing less than a prayer that God would manifest Himself as a Judge,—yes, and as a Destroyer. How unlike it is to the prayers which we are naturally disposed to offer up! How unlike it is to the prayers which we should offer up if we attended to the words of many grave and religious counsellors! "O God, remain far from us, remain hidden from us; teach us how to escape Thy judgments! Let Saints, Angels, the Virgin-Mother, Thy Son, interpose between us and Thy burning wrath!" These are the cries which ascend out of the natural heart of man. And they seem to justify themselves by arguments of religion as well as

of reason. Is not the preacher sent to tell us how terrible the wrath of God is, how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God? Is he not sent to tell us, in the words of the very prophet from whom the text comes, of a Man "who shall be a hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest"?

If Isaiah contradicts himself, no comments of ours can restore sense and coherency to his words. But perhaps this passage respecting the Man who is to be a covert from the heat and from the tempest does not contradict, but illustrates the prayer in the text; perhaps our fancy that there is a contradiction may show us, more than anything else, how our Theology differs from his. Isaiah craved for a Man who should deliver men from the oppressions of the world's tyranny, from the storms which are raised by the passions of peoples and rulers, from the weariness and exhaustion which follow, when they have accomplished their projects with great labour and nothing comes out of them. All the misery which they cause springs, so the prophet thinks, from their assuming to be gods themselves and from the disbelief which they cherish and which they generate in a God who is altogether unlike them, whose ways are not their ways, whose purposes are not their purposes. And what he longed for was, that the true Man should appear, who would thoroughly manifest the ways and purposes of the true God; who would remove the thick veil which had intercepted His light from reaching His creatures, who

would make them know that He was present with them, that He was ruling them and judging them. To long then for a Man who should be a hiding-place from the tempest and a covert from the storm or heat, was the very same thing as to long that God would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would flow down at His presence.

I have said, however, that there is a natural heart in all of us, baptized and unbaptized,—Christian, Jew, Turk, Pagan,—which is averse from this prayer, which would rather utter any prayer than this. And I have hinted also that there is a natural religion—natural in one sense, most artificial in another—which adapts itself to these cravings and inclinations of ours, and supplies them with a language. Such a religion one meets with in every country of the earth; it connects itself with all professions; it is able to make almost all litanies into its instruments; to the highest and to the lowest of people it commends itself equally. Priests organize this religion into a system of practices; doctors, into a system of notions. It has one great common characteristic, which is discovered through all its special forms. To keep God at a distance from men is the end which it proposes to itself; to convert all persons who perform its offices, all prayers and dogmas, into barriers more or less secure against His appearing and His vengeance, is its art.

But widely spread as this religion has been and is, wonderful as seem its powers of adaptation to dif-

ferent latitudes and traditions, it has wanted the great sign of Universality. It expresses all *different* feelings of men, in different conditions of disease. It does not express the one *common* feeling of men, to be raised out of their diseases, to be made whole. It puts into a number of different shapes the dread and horror of God—the wish that there were no God—which dwells in every man. It has no language for the infinite craving after God, the intense longing to be brought face to face with Him,—to encounter all His vengeance rather than to be separated from Him, which dwells also in every man. That desire is kindled by a number of objects in nature; the sunrise and sunset, the still lake, the faces of children, the music of the human voice. In all these things there is a witness of something calmer, brighter, truer than himself. There is a witness to man that he is to cry after this; that only this will satisfy him. But there is a witness, also as strong, in them and in him, that they do not contain the treasure. There is a more perplexing witness, that it is nearer to him than it is to them; and yet that he, and not they, would shut it out, would fain extinguish it. The deep and the sky say to man, 'It is not in us.' They answer his question with another, 'Is it not in *thee?*' And when he seeks, he begins to exclaim first, 'If it is, let it depart from me, for I am a sinner;' and then, 'Let it come near to me, though I am a sinner, or I shall continue one for ever and for ever.' No wonder that every prayer which translates

the cry, 'Depart from me' into the dialect of a particular tribe, which moulds it according to the circumstances and habits of that tribe, should be entertained with wonderful tenacity, should be always gathering new accretions from fresh experiences of inward evil. And yet I say the universal prayer—the prayer which goes up from the whole heart of humanity, which is heard at once in every dialect wherein men are born, —which is heard amidst all those sounds that are most discordant with it, is this of Isaiah's; this, that God would make Himself known, if it be in mountains melting away and in a fire that burneth.

Where can the Prophet have learnt that prayer? How can he have been spokesman for Egyptians, Phœnicians, Assyrians, who despised his tribe and his worship; for Greeks, Romans, Goths, who were not yet known in the world? Had he not been taught to look upon his nation as dwelling alone among the nations? Was it not fenced round by ordinances and prohibitions from intercourse with them, from participation in their habits and their prayers? Yes! and thus, even thus, had he been disciplined to understand that man does not require to be protected against God, but that God should protect him against himself, and should raise him out of the slavery which he invents for himself. Thus was he prepared to receive every event which befell Israel, or the enemies of Israel, as a sign that God was coming out of His place to judge the one and the other; not the chosen race

less severely than those who despised it and trampled on it,—but both by the same eternal law of righteousness, both for the purpose of establishing righteousness and truth in the earth—of purging out of it whatever loveth and maketh a lie. Thus did he learn that the misery of Heathen nations was that they suspected their gods; that they supposed their authority to be merged in the authority of those who ministered to them; that they fancied the worshiper could flatter and pervert them by his offerings. Thus did he come to perceive how hateful in God's eyes are the services which He has Himself appointed, when they are not rendered to Him as a righteous Being, when they are not acknowledgments of His purpose to make men righteous. Thus did he come to know that the melting fire, the fire which causes the waters to boil, is not only the minister of men's purposes, —though it is that, though they are meant to compel all the subtlest agencies of Nature into their service; that it is also God's minister, the executor of his justice upon the wrong-doers of the earth, an instrument of its purification. Thus did he learn to rejoice even when he trembled, at the convulsions in the outward world or in human society which bade his people cease from men whose breath was in their nostrils, and go into the clefts of the rocks for the fear of the Lord and for the glory of His Majesty. Thus did he understand that by all such signs was God avenging the cause of the poor and of those

who had no helper, was shaking kings on their thrones, was surprising the hypocrites. Thus did he perceive that to fall into the hands of the living God is indeed fearful, if we are separating our cause from the cause of those whom He has made in His image, if we are seeking some advantage for ourselves, but that the only hope for us and for all human beings is, that the Living God should make the nations tremble at His presence, that He should prove Himself—and not some dead God—far less the Spirit of Pride, Oppression, Injustice—to be Lord of the nations. Thus finally was Isaiah made into the Evangelical prophet, the witness that unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, who can be a covert from the tempest, because He is both the Son of Man and the Son of God; because God appearing in Him does indeed rend the heavens and come down.

Isaiah accompanied that prophecy of a Son who should be born, with other words which often sound strange to us, as we read them in connection with these: "*Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood. But this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.*" How does such language accord with our notions of Him who is called in this very passage *the Prince of Peace*,—who, we affirm, was revealed in the city of David, meek and sitting upon an ass, with none of the signs and trophies of the warrior? Does not Isaiah appear to associate with His appearing a battle far more tre-

mendous and destructive than ordinary battles? Did Jesus of Nazareth not fulfil the idea which his language sets forth to us? Or is He hereafter to be another than He was, when the children poured forth their hosannas to Him,—when the daughters of Jerusalem followed Him to the Cross,—when the Apostles preached of Him to Jews and Greeks?

Brethren, I hold that the Prophet's words were accomplishing themselves strictly and literally when Jesus came in great humility; when He died; when He rose; when He ascended; when the Apostles bade their countrymen and the Greeks and the Latins receive Him as their king. I hold that they have been accomplishing themselves ever since, and are accomplishing themselves now. When Jesus came among Scribes and Pharisees, among Publicans and Sinners, when He claimed to be the Son of Man, sympathizing with men, healing men's diseases, vindicating the day of rest for men, preaching to them the Kingdom of God,—when He took to Himself the power and functions of a Son of God, bidding devils depart, forgiving sins,—He did not at once stir up that customary battle of the warrior with confused noise and garments dyed in blood. Nothing appeared to threaten such a battle. But one was raging in the hearts of men, raging like a fire which seized hold of every inflammable material, and turned it into its own nature. 'Is this our King, the true King of men, or is He, as the Scribes and Pharisees tell us,

a liar and a blasphemer? Does He manifest to us the nature of the God who created us, or, as they say, of the Devil who is destroying us?' Was a battle which had this issue described by the Prophet in exaggerated phrases? Must it not be the battle of all battles, the central battle of the Universe,—yes, and the final one? Did it not assume still mightier proportions when the assertion went forth that Death, the Grave, Hell,—all that had been the terrors of mankind, the powers of the invisible world which were holding the visible in dread,—had been encountered and vanquished for men by their Champion and Lord; because He came to do His Father's Will? What a subversion of all the religious maxims by which the governments of the world had been supported! What a contradiction of the whole policy to which the nation of Israel, and every other, was pledged!

For soon the question was debated, not only in the secret hearts of men, but in the Temple, whither the Jews always resorted,—in the market-place, which was the exercise-ground for Greek philosophy, as well as Greek trade,—whether the Cæsar, or this crucified Man of whom the tent-maker spoke, was really King of kings and Lord of lords. What could come of such a debate but that which did come of it? First, the chosen people confessing that they had no king but Cæsar; that they had given over the dream of any other; that such a one was the ideal they pro-

posed to themselves; then that same people provoking the Cæsar—the God-General to whom they had surrendered all the faith and hopes of past ages —to show that he was stronger than any of the miserable anarchs who tried to obtain rule in the holy city, and that he was commissioned to destroy it. Next, when that old foe was swept away, the Cæsar discovered a new foe, not shut within walls, not tied by local customs, but speaking its treason to every tribe of which the Emperor was master, affirming constantly that One Who had sacrificed Himself, Who lived for ever and ever, not a commander of legions who bade men sacrifice to his image, was the Ruler in the armies of Heaven, and would be found to be mightiest on earth. Supposing such a doctrine was not mere madness, and did not die out of itself, or was not at once crushed by the imperial power, could it be anything less than the commencement of a battle with burning and fuel of fire? Was it not sure in time to be the cause of some of those more material battles with confused noise, and garments dyed in blood?

And if that battle ended, as we know that it did,—if a Christendom rose out of the Roman empire—if the empire itself bowed to the Cross,—did that cry become mute, to which we suppose that Christ's appearing was the answer,—the cry that the true God would *"rend the heavens, and come down, that the mountains might flow down at His presence; that as when the melting*

fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, He would make His name known to His adversaries, that the nations might tremble at His presence"? Mute it could not be, unless the rulers of the earth, civil and ecclesiastical, were confessing in their words and their deeds the righteous King, the self-sacrificing King, to be their King and the King of men, and that he had come into the world that he might establish His righteous, heavenly order in the midst of it. Loud must be the cry ascending from the lonely couch of misery, from the dens where prisoners lie, for speaking right words and refusing to be the agents of treacherous men,—louder and louder must the cry become, swelled with the cries of all ages, echoed ever by new saints beneath the altar,—if the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of the earth think that a Cæsar, and not a crucified Man, holds the real and highest royalty; if they lead men to think that Christ came into the world not to redeem but to enslave it, not to bring us near to God, but to hide us from Him. Hidden from Him, living in a dark unbelief respecting His character and purposes, men are left to the mercy of all whom He has entrusted with powers to wield in His name: those powers are sure to be wielded for the curse and not for the blessing of His creatures.

Brethren, it is needful for us to be dwelling far more earnestly in these thoughts than has been our wont. Battles with confused noise and garments rolled in blood may end for a little while. Do not

let us think that the battle with burning and fuel of fire,—the battle of principles—has ended or can end. Let us understand that we are more than ever in the midst of it. Let us not try to sever, for they are inseparable, those principles which affect the polities of the earth and those which concern the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of Righteousness. All unrighteous government whatever, all that sets itself against the order and freedom of man, is hostile to Christ's government, is rebellion against Him, in whatsoever name and by whatsoever instruments it is administered. Let us go back to this old and undoubted maxim, for we are strangely forgetting it amongst notions about religious interests and civil interests, religious duties and common duties. Remember that what were supposed to be religious interests and religious duties among the Jews, set themselves up to war with Christ, to blaspheme Christ, to crucify Christ, when He came in the flesh. Remember that the religious interests and religious duties of the Roman world were those which sent the witnesses for Christ to the wild-beasts. Remember that they have been the pleas for every crime that has been committed for the last eighteen hundred years. God has permitted us in this land to be witnesses that civil tyranny and ecclesiastical tyranny are equally detestable in His sight; that one must always be strengthening and abetting the other; that both alike dread the appearing of Him who is the true Judge of

men, because the sufferer for them and with them. Oh, let us never abandon that testimony! Let us ask that everything which hinders us from bearing it faithfully may be taken out of our hearts! In us, as in others, there is the notion,—always working, sometimes expressing itself in words, and assuming the shape of Christian orthodoxy,—that we want a deliverer, not from Atheism, but from God; a Mediator to prevent Him from fulfilling His cruel designs against us; not a Mediator to reveal to us His love and to purge us from our own cruelty, that we may be partakers of it. In us there is a feeling that the Judge and the Saviour are different beings, or the same Being pursuing different purposes; not that He who hung upon the Cross will show in the day which winds up this age, as He showed in the day which wound up the former age, that His is that power which is meant to draw all things to itself; that all power which is not like His must be dividing and destructive. Let us think of it well, that we, like the other nations, may have to decide what it is which we reverence and worship most in our hearts; whether it is the Spirit of Him who took upon Him the form of a servant, and became the lowest of all that He might exalt all, or the Spirit which exalts itself that it may crush humanity. Let us solemnly determine that nothing shall tempt us to abandon our hope for the freedom and blessedness of all the nations of the earth. But let us place our hopes, not in the promises of princes or in the schemes of plot-

ters, but in the oath of God, that He will set Truth upon the earth. Then the cry, "*Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down,*" will be answered to us no less than it was to our forefathers. Now, as of old, the bitterest disappointments will be the preparation for the surest hope; when darkness is thickest the Light will come forth, to shine over all, and not to be extinguished for ever.

Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

July 24, 1859.

1 CORINTHIANS IX. 17.

"FOR IF I DO THIS THING WILLINGLY, I HAVE A REWARD; BUT IF AGAINST MY WILL, A DISPENSATION OF THE GOSPEL IS COMMITTED TO ME."

'THAT man,' it is often said, 'is a mere official. He 'goes through his work today as he went through it 'yesterday, as he has gone through it any day for the 'last thirty or forty years; with the same punctual 'accuracy; with the same absence of interest and 'enthusiasm; with all the success of a machine; with 'nothing of the feeling or life of a man.' All of us have heard these comments upon one and another of our fellow-creatures; most of us have recognized the description as in certain cases just, and when just, as not a little terrible; some have nevertheless said, 'It 'applies characteristically to England. Surely nowhere 'do men so readily pass into officials as here. No- 'where does the dry sense of duty so absorb into itself 'the passion for glory, personal affection, the delight 'in what is good for its own sake, even the hope of

'any rewards, however palpable and material, for toil. 'All pleasure in what has been, or is, all anticipa- 'tion of what may be, sinks into the mere confession 'of a necessity that certain services should be per- 'formed, though the performer would rather, if that 'were possible, transact them in his sleep.'

But when we have spoken thus disparagingly of our people, patriotism has its revenge. The discovery is forced upon us that we cannot separate ourselves from those among whom it is our lot to be born; their tendencies are our tendencies; whatever temptation they are exposed to must assail us. Very soon the man who has denounced slavery to routine most, who has condemned it most in this or that neighbour, perceives that it is threatening himself. The very efforts he has made to maintain his freedom have contributed to rob him of it. He was determined not to walk in a track which had been marked out for him; he would not be tied, like other people, by times and places,—by a formal, prescribed order. But he must follow some order, and that which he invents is found after a while to shackle him as much as that which he has abandoned for it. He can break it certainly with less compunction, but while it lasts it is not less a bondage because it is without the authority of prescription; rather the perpetual change, the custom of breaking through customs, becomes the cruellest of all necessities; it involves the loss of power, weariness, poor results or none, till the proud libertine

is ready to accept any ruler, provided he is formal enough, minute enough in his exactions; provided he will save his servant from the fearful privilege of deciding, in any matter whatsoever, for himself.

We know what is continually the consequence of these opposing experiences,—of these violent reactions. But what *ought* to be the result of them? Were those wrong who looked upon dry, dead officiality as an evil? If it is an evil, is it one to which we must succumb because it is our national or our natural propensity? Is there no good at the bottom of it which we may separate from the corruption? If we could retain that, might we not also hope to find how the individual freedom, of which Englishmen are tenacious, may sustain and not destroy the sense of duty which is also so strong in them? Might we not hope that our lives, instead of being a mere battle of opposing errors trying to neutralize each other, might become a reconciliation of forces all directed towards the same end?

I. I have stated this difficulty in the most general form, because it is one which besets us all in our different spheres of work. All are tempted to be mere officials; all are taught in some way or other that *not* to be officials—to be choosing their own course of action instead of accepting a certain course of action as marked out for them, to cut many roads instead of to be walking forward in one—is to make existence abortive. If a clergyman were to say that

this was his especial trial, that other men could not understand it or enter into it, that certain maxims applied to him which did not apply to them, he would be destroying the very significance of his name and function,—he would be owning that he had not any message to his fellows. But he may declare—I think he is bound to declare—that what is true of them is true, in a higher and more appalling sense, of him; that if they are in danger of becoming mere creatures of routine, and of losing all lively consciousness of the tasks they are engaged in, that danger lies at least as close to him, and may overwhelm him in a more utter and hopeless moral death; that if in their efforts to avoid so great a peril they encounter another,—if they become irregular, self-willed, running like men who run in a dream, fighting as those that fight the air,—this also is one which is always besetting him, which has caused him a thousand falls, which he can only escape from when he ceases to charge his misdoings upon his circumstances, when he confesses them as sins in himself. If he learns this art—a very hard one to learn and to practise—he may begin also to confess the sins of those whom he pretends to teach; he may not be quite unable to help them in some of their perplexities.

II. He will be able to do that work most effectually, if he studies under the greatest of all Christ's preachers and Evangelists. In the passage before us, St. Paul unfolds the principle which we set at nought when we

fall into official dryness, calling it a devotion to duty, as well as that which we set at nought when we try, as we say, to obey the impulses of love and affection rather than of duty. The Apostle refers his words first of all to himself. He always does so. He never lays down a rule for other men which he has not tested in his own case. *Rules* therefore is not the right name for any of the great moral maxims of which his letters are full. They are the announcement of laws, human and universal laws, into the perception of which he has been led by some individual experience. *Who* has led him, how little he could have learnt anything by merely passing through trials, if there had not been One to interpret them and give him the fruit of them,—he is telling us continually; when he does not tell, it is assumed in his discourse, in the title which he bears, in the work which he does. But the authority which he claims is not to announce dogmas *ex cathedrâ,* but to exhibit the processes through which they have become parts of *his* being, and may become parts of *our* being.

III. The impression of the Apostle which we naturally adopt from his writings—the one which divines of nearly all schools try to fix on us—is that of a man overpowered by a vehement conviction, which he must proclaim to the world at any cost of reputation or of life. There is nothing in the passage before us to alter that impression, much to deepen it. But

different, almost opposite meanings, may be given to the phrase—'*overpowered by a conviction.*' Oftentimes, I think, we attach to it a sense which is not the most natural and obvious one. We suppose that a man having taken up an opinion, or entered upon a course of action, throws the whole energy of his will into it; that from thenceforth it is so intensely and essentially *his* opinion, *his* course of action, that you might as soon make water run up a hill, or fire cease to burn, as sever him from it. Whether any person ever has been or ever can be in this way identified with some thought or purpose of his own, I will not stop to inquire. In general, those men who have advanced most fixedly and unflinchingly towards a purpose of good or of evil, have been those who have felt that a Power—many of them called it Destiny—fixed their purposes, fixed what should be the issue of those purposes. To such men multitudes crouch, none more than those who treat their belief with scorn, as superstitious or hypocritical. Among them, rather than among those who speak of their own determination, St. Paul must be reckoned. He declares in the verse before my text (the 16th), *that a necessity is laid upon him, yea woe is to him if he preaches not the Gospel.* A more entire renunciation of the doctrine that he had chosen his work, that he became a preacher because he liked to preach, cannot be imagined. The sternest believer in Destiny, the hardest fatalist, never rejected that mode of speech

more than the Apostle does. You may say he was overpowered by a conviction, if you please; perhaps he might not repudiate the language; perhaps you may mean what he means. But it is not his habitual phraseology. He speaks of being *called*. He delights to describe himself as an Apostle or a messenger. He utterly disclaims the thought that he could at his pleasure divest himself of his function, any more than he could at his pleasure enter upon it. He is a steward, the steward of Another's treasures. He is commanded to distribute them. Woe is to him if he does not distribute them!

IV. St. Paul, then, is an official. He has a duty which is to be performed. It is a prescribed duty. There is something to be done, and he cannot fix what that something shall be. It is to be a continuous duty, a recurring duty. And what is more, the Apostle is perfectly aware that he may become reluctant to perform this duty. "*If I do this thing willingly*," he says, "*I have a reward.*" He assumes of course that he might do it unwillingly. In the next clause he says expressly that he might. St. Paul did not differ from other men in that respect. He was liable to the same alternations of feelings, to the same exhaustion, to the same despondency and disgust. And the character of the news which he bore did not secure him against the intrusion of such moods of mind. It was good news; but the majority of those who heard it did not count it good. Those

who did, continually misunderstood it and perverted it. Often the fruits of it seemed to others, seemed even to him, the most unlike what were to have been expected. And then every doubt respecting its origin or its efficacy recoiled upon himself; a chill came over the heart which should have poured it forth; it seemed to fall dead from his lips; there was no *reward.*

V. For the reward was, he affirms, attached to his *willingness.* He found it so; his experience in this respect answering to that of all other men. What was done as taskwork could not bring any joy to him who did it; no present joy, none in retrospection, none in looking forward. In some works, there may be a hope of a compensation hereafter for the mere amount of what is done here, irrespective of the spirit in which it is done. The hope can never be a very clear or lively one; sullenness and discontent will be great elements in it, and these must sadly disturb any compound into which they enter. But St. Paul could cherish no such hope. If he was not in sympathy with the Gospel which he preached, he was not in sympathy with the mind and character of God which were revealed in that Gospel. But the reward he held forth to men was that they should know this mind and character thoroughly, that they should have fellowship with God. It was a contradiction and an impossibility to connect this reward with a temper and habit of being which were alien from it. The

highest blessing he could ask was that this temper and habit should be entirely reversed.

VI. The question then of all questions was, How could he obtain that willingness which was the only pledge and foretaste of any such reward as God had prepared for men? And here came in the great difference between the Apostle and the believers in a mere Fate or Destiny. They were agreed to this extent. The Apostle held that a necessity was laid upon him. He was not at liberty to devise a scheme of life for himself. One had been devised for him. He was under fearful obligations and sacraments to pursue that scheme and no other. "*Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.*" 'Woe is me if I preach any-'thing except that, or if I do not preach that! But 'the Gospel is an announcement of God's goodwill to 'men, of the peace which God has made with men. 'I did not undertake the office of a preacher because 'my will urged me to undertake it. I was the servant 'of *His* Will. He who loved men sent me to tell 'them of His Love to them. He who had reconciled 'men to Himself sent me to tell them of His recon-'ciliation, that they might be reconciled to Him. I 'am the minister, then, of a Will which is all good 'and gracious. I am the minister of a Will which can 'conquer rebellious, which can bring reluctant wills 'into consent with itself. Do I believe this mes-'sage? Then I can ask that that Will—that loving, 'conquering Will—may bear upon mine, may bring

'me into fellowship and harmony with it. I can ask 'that I, the preacher, may not be out of tune with the 'perfect Nature which I declare can bring, and pur- 'poses to bring, all natures into accordance with it. 'Although, then, I am shown—shown again and again '—that left to myself I shall not be the willing pro- 'claimer of these tidings, that I shall grow indifferent 'and cold to them; that I shall repeat them because 'it is my business to repeat them, or because they 'once took a strong hold upon my spirit; though I 'have the clearest evidence of this painful truth, and 'though I know that while it is so, I can have no re- 'ward at present, I can expect no reward in the ages 'to come,—yet am I equally sure that He who has 'committed this message to me concerning His Will 'and the will of His creatures, can make me willing 'in the day of His power, can turn His poor, hard 'official into a living and rejoicing witness of His 'goodness and truth, can make that witness effectual 'for the ends to which He designs it.'

VII. And so an infinite consolation springs out of that side of the alternative which looks at first so disheartening. "*But if against my will a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me.*" For a man to be preaching this Gospel *against his will;* for him to have a stewardship which under such conditions he must miserably discharge, this strikes us as unspeakably mournful. Nevertheless he whose preaching caused the light of Christ to shine throughout

the world, confronts the possibility, does not shrink from treating it as a possibility for him. Why need he? The more he is conscious of the impotency of his own will, and confesses how it may become alienated from the true Will, the more does the intention of that Will and its transcendent capacity to subdue even all things to itself dawn upon him. There is honey in the carcase of the dead lion; when it seems as if all strength were gone, then is the real strength, the only strength, beginning to manifest itself. "*Nevertheless*"—be the conditions of my will what they may—"*a dispensation is committed to me.*" 'I know that there is. My calling and election to this 'office stand out broad and clear, written in sunbeams, 'as I, the officer, am lost in shadow. The thing is 'true, and the decree is certain as the laws of the Medes 'and the Persians which alter not, for this will of 'mine has had nothing to do with the creating of it, 'cannot procure the revoking of it. Though I or an 'angel from heaven say that God's will is not what 'the Gospel says it is, that all men should be saved 'and should come to the knowledge of the truth, let 'me or that angel be accursed. For that Will, and not 'my will or an angel's, shall be done on earth even as 'it is in Heaven.'

VIII. Brethren, this is the doctrine which we have to learn at the feet of St. Paul, and which I trust we shall learn and lay to heart for all times of wealth and of tribulation, of self-exaltation and of despon-

dency. It is a comfort, an infinite comfort, to think that no divine word which goes out of our lips is dependent for its truth, or even for its success, upon the purity of the lips, upon the right will or the heart of the speaker. It is a comfort beyond all comfort to believe that *the* Will, *the* Heart, from which the good news has first proceeded, are without variableness or the least shadow of turning. It is a comfort, in this sense, to feel that we are officials, open to the same charges and just charges of coldness and deadness as all others who bear that name. But may we not ask, as the one greatest sign of the forgiveness of those who hear for that which has not done them good, of thankfulness to God for anything which has entered into them and borne fruit, that they will desire this blessing for their teachers that they may be *good* stewards of the manifold gifts of God; stewards, I mean, who have not merely a dispensation committed to them, but who respond to the mind and will of Him who has committed it, whose spirits are quickened and actuated continually by His Spirit? Then, I think, we—ceasing to be mere officials and yet more than ever feeling that there can be nothing more blessed and glorious than duty, because He who exacts duty is Himself the source of all loving sympathy and affection, because we keep His commandment when we love one another—shall be better able to help all classes and conditions of men in pursuing the great principle of an Englishman's

life, and in avoiding the death to which that principle, when it is separated from its root, inevitably leads. The sense of duty draws all its strength and nourishment from the acknowledgment of a God who never acts from caprice or self-will, who governs all things in heaven and earth according to the order which He has imposed upon them, who seeks to bring all voluntary beings into an understanding of His order and into cheerful consent with it. Obedience and Freedom meet and embrace each other when we believe that He asks us to yield up our wills as sacrifices to His who has first made the great sacrifice for us, Who in that sacrifice has united us to Himself. Then no office can be looked upon as anything less than a calling; in the highest and in the lowest Christ's own voice is saying, "Follow me." Then this whole nation, like that of which St. Paul was one of the latest and noblest representatives, will become indeed a chosen nation, bound to do God's work among the nations; to bear witness of Him, even unwillingly,—but if willingly, oh! with what reward to each citizen and to generations unborn!

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

October 23, 1859.

PSALM XXXI. 7. (*Prayer-book Version.*)

"I HAVE HATED THEM THAT HOLD OF SUPERSTITIOUS VANITIES: AND MY TRUST HATH BEEN IN THE LORD."

THE doctrine of this text is very unlike one which is frequently heard in this day and from many different quarters. How often we are told, and how apt we are to think, that superstition is an excessive or exaggerated faith; that superstition diminishes with the growth of intelligence, because faith diminishes; that those who would arouse ignorant and vulgar people to faith in God, must appeal more or less directly to their superstition! This opinion presents itself in various aspects. Perhaps most of us can remember some occasions upon which we have accepted it as if it were an axiom, and have drawn practical conclusions from it. If we have been strongly alive to the mischiefs and horrors of superstition, we have been willing to risk the loss of faith that we might get rid of them; when the reaction has come, and we have felt that the world could not go on safely without

faith, we have been ready to tolerate a considerable amount of superstition, lest its companion should perish with it.

The Psalmist, we see, looks at the subject from quite another point of view. He opposes '*superstitious vanities*' to '*trust in the Lord.*' One is the protest against the other; one is to be the deliverance from the other. It is not an isolated statement,—one which we can escape from by a little change in the words or the construction. It contains the very spirit of the Old Testament. Trust in God,—an invisible God,—a righteous God,—is the principle which every lawgiver, warrior, prophet, priest, is to exhibit in his actions, to enforce upon his land. So far as his trust fails, he fails to do the work he is called to do. Distrust is the sin which he charges upon his people; because they trust in this invisible, loving, righteous Being, they are not to tremble before visible things or men, they are not to fear the invisible powers of evil. Losing trust, they are told that they will infallibly bow down to objects of Nature, to idols of wood and stone; they will listen to wizards that peep and mutter; they will fear where no fear is; they will make their cruel imaginations into gods, and worship them.

The prophets of the chosen people, whose names and deeds are commemorated in Scripture, thoroughly entered into this principle. There is none to whom our thoughts are more continually directed than to Elijah. He is the witness for God in the age of the

worst king; his name became typical of the witnesses for Him in after-ages. What is his work? You will fancy, perhaps, that he goes to a people who are utterly indifferent to all religious acts and exercises, that he may stir up their terror of the consequences which their indifference may bring on them. No! He goes to a people busy with all religious acts and exercises; devoted to priests; continually at their hill altars; praying, crying and cutting themselves with stones, that they may gain a hearing. He goes to them, that he may turn them from these acts, for which he has no tolerance; that he may call upon them to trust in the Lord God of their nation, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; that he may restore the worship which expresses the calm trust in Him who had made a covenant with them, who had never ceased to watch over them and care for them, who was even then turning their hearts back to Himself.

Look again at the kings who are commended in the same record. Hezekiah is one of the most noted of them. When Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem, his General made an oration, intended, as he boasted, quite as much for the people as for the king, exposing the absurdity of his different grounds of confidence that the city could be saved. What horses and riders had he? Was Egypt likely to aid him? And then he went on: "*But if ye say unto me, 'We trust in the Lord our God,' is not that He whose altars and high places Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Jerusalem*

and Judæa, Ye shall worship at this altar in Jerusalem?" No argument could have been so plausible; none will have seemed to a heathen ruler so perfectly conclusive. 'What! this king dares to say that he has 'some claims on the powers above for his devotion! 'If he had set up altars in all parts of his kingdom, 'and invited the people to go to them, he might have 'some pretence to the character of a religious king. 'But he has done just the reverse. He has pulled 'down altars. He has merely cared to bring them to 'his capital. Will not the God whom he professes to 'serve, show His sense of that crime by giving up his 'city to me?' And these very acts were those which proved, the Scripture says, that Hezekiah trusted in the Lord God more than all the kings that were before him.

But if the words of the Psalmist express a genuine Jewish feeling, are they equally applicable to the New Dispensation? Let us consider. The Apostles certainly did not seek, like Hezekiah, to make all men worship at the altar in Jerusalem. They foretold that Jerusalem and its temple would perish; they charged their countrymen with rejecting their King; they formed churches, confessing that King as the King of Men, in all the different cities of the Roman empire. There was the greatest change and contrast in outward circumstances between them and those of whom we have been speaking. But there was no change in principle. Wherever the preachers of the Gospel went, they found men practising one superstitious vanity or

another, bowing down to visible gods, trembling at the future, seeking for diviners who could penetrate its secrets. Wherever they went, they found men fearing gods, trying to conciliate their favour or avert their wrath. Wherever they went, they heard of devotees, male and female, who associated the service of the divinities with frantic utterances and wild contortions. To interfere with them was not in their power: state force, and mob opinion, were leagued in support of them. All they could do was to proclaim a Being whom men might trust; One who loved them; One who had sent His Son to take their nature and die for them; One who had made peace with them; One who had sent His Spirit to convert the wills that refused to be at peace with Him. They did proclaim such a Being, they did incite men to trust in Him. And by so doing they struck such a blow at superstitious vanities as no iconoclast ever struck. They testified a hatred of them which they could not have testified, if they had had power to lay low every heathen altar, to cast every idol into the fire. They earned the hatred of those who held to these superstitious vanities. Not a martyr fell under the axe, or was tied to the stake, or was fastened to a cross, but because he would not do sacrifice to the likeness of some emperor, or some god whom the emperor sanctioned with his divine fiat. Not one had courage to make that denial, but because he trusted in the Lord, who had given His Son to be the perfect sacrifice for the

sins of the world. The truth, then, which was proclaimed of old, remained good from generation to generation. Superstition was the enemy of trust, in the days after the Incarnation as in the days before it. Trust, because the object of it was more fully revealed, was a mightier destroyer of superstition than it had ever been.

And does not our own experience, my brethren, confirm the doctrine of Prophets and Apostles? We need not go far to look for examples of superstition, that we may understand its nature. We carry it about with us. Each one has some superstitious vanity or other to which he is prone; some dark shadow which haunts him; some visible or invisible terror, which is always ready to make a coward of him. We may try to lay them by experience, by calculations of chances, by arguments of science. All such helps are good; but there are moments when they fail altogether. Those are the moments, generally speaking, when they are wanted most; when the body is weak; when the fancy is strong; when there is no leisure for trains of reasoning. Oh! is not Trust, simple Trust, in One who is above all and through all,—who knows the whole Creation, who knows us and our weaknesses;—is it not this which puts the vision to flight? Is it not this which enables us to answer the suggestion, that we are sinful, and therefore have a good right to fear; that we are sinful, and therefore have no right to hope? God

has spoken to us sinners, and bidden us confide in Him. So far as we do as He commands, we overcome our sin; so far as we refuse to do it, sin overcomes us. Have we not then a sure witness in ourselves of the fact, that Superstition and Faith are not of the same kin, but are deadly and everlasting foes?

The history of Christendom, I believe, if we look at all below the surface, leads to the same conclusion. When Protestants find fault with Romanists for attaching importance to the intercession of Saints, or to their relics, are they blaming an excess of faith? I hope not. To believe that those who have sympathized with their fellows on earth are sympathizing with them wherever they are; to think that those who prayed against the evils of the world are praying against them now;—this surely is not to be denounced as superstition. No more is it superstition to regard every token and memorial of the departed, in one period or another, with affection and reverence. To hold this faith is to hold that the visible and the invisible world have been united; that the grave has no longer a victory. But to suppose that Saints intercede with God, not according to His Will, not for the doing of His Will, but that they may induce Him to change His Will; to suppose that dead things have in them some charm and power which does not belong to the living agencies which are at work throughout God's creation,—*this* is superstition: because this is loss of trust in God; this has its ground

in *dis*trust of Him. Or to take an instance from a very different class of men; from those who regarded the intercession of Saints and the efficacy of relics with horror. Why do our reason and conscience pronounce the most distinct and vehement condemnation of those murders which were enacted by the Puritans in New England, against the men and women whom they charged with the sin of witchcraft? Not because they recognized the fact of evil, not because they recognized the power of evil,—not because they believed that that power might acquire a frightful tyranny over human creatures who submitted to it. Stern facts compelled them to make these confessions; they would have lost the vigour of their characters, the might which enabled them to struggle with the untilled earth and subdue it, if they had not had these convictions. But they became cruel and savage, because they lost the faith that good was mightier than evil; that no man need be the victim and slave of the Devil, because Christ had conquered the Devil. They did not trust in the Lord, and so they yielded to superstitions—vanities we can hardly call them, they were so dark and deadly. And they left a warning to all who should come after, that they may fall into crimes as great, which shall seem to them also full of religion, if their religion ever ceases to be one of Trust, and passes into one of slavish fear.

But is there nothing, then, in the notion that even

the worst superstitions are better than the utter void which is left in the soul when they have departed? Is there nothing in the dream, that they may be the preparation for a higher and purer faith? Even the worst superstitions are, assuredly, a sign and pledge that man is more than an animal,—that he is a spirit; that he is connected with a visible as well as an invisible world; that you cannot chain him to Time, if you bring all the fetters of sensuality and of philosophy to help you. Even the worst superstitions may, in this sense, be the preparation for faith; they are inarticulate cries and groans for a Revelation of the unseen world which shall scatter them; for a Gospel of God and of a Kingdom of Heaven which shall be a deliverance from them. But then it follows from this, that we are never to acknowledge the superstition as the radical thing in any human creature; we are to consider it a disease which cleaves to the root of his being, and which is always threatening to kill him. We can hope for no aid from it: our object must be, in the surest and shortest way we can find, to dispossess him of it. And if we take the shortest, the direct method, that which the words of the Psalmist and the example of the Apostles point out to us, we never need fear that the departure of Superstition will prepare the way for the entrance of Atheism. We should rather assure ourselves continually that superstition is of the nature of Atheism, and will at last pass into it, if God is not presented to the faith and trust of men.

I think these reflections are important to us just at this time for several reasons. One especially has induced me to bring them before you this afternoon. You have all been hearing and reading of great religious movements, which have taken place in some parts of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and the like of which may occur in England. It is not my purpose to comment on the conflicting opinions of clergymen or laymen respecting these phenomena. Many of the statistics on both sides will, I should conceive, be thrown aside as worthless by persons at all used to the examination of evidence; so impossible must it be as yet to collect or arrange the facts which show whether the results, on the whole, have been good or evil. If it should hereafter appear that the mother-vice of those impressible, excitable Celtic populations has been diminished since the preachers went among them,—if any number of them shall learn to dread a lie, and to speak the truth simply and habitually,—how much cause will there be for thankfulness, what sure proof will there be that the God of Truth has been accomplishing a mighty work among them! But it must be distinctly understood and announced that such an effect never has proceeded, never will proceed, from the encouragement of superstitious vanities of one kind or another; that it has proceeded, and will proceed, only from the awakening of trust in a righteous God, who seeks to make men righteous. Whatever appeals are made to the nerves, and not to the conscience, to

that which is weak and fantastic in man or woman, and not to that which is deep and earnest,—let these appeals be as passionate as they may be, let them be apparently ever so effectual,—must, if the precedents and statements in the Bible are true, and if all past experience is not fallacious, lead to moral mischief and not good. No doubt the gold and the clay may be mingled, as they are in most human compositions. The orator may mix addresses to the nerves with addresses to the conscience, may sometimes invoke and evoke superstition, sometimes faith. But just according to the predominance of either element will be the result; and therefore it is most needful that they should not be confounded by those who profess themselves ministers of the Spirit of God, lest haply they should make themselves ministers of the Spirit of Lies.

Some parts of this subject I might deem more important in another congregation than this, a congregation of clergymen, or of persons mixing greatly in the debates and factions of the religious world. But what I have said today, I believe may be as needful here as anywhere. For I have observed that cultivated men often speak on this fashion. They say that "the common people require a treatment quite "different from that which *they* require. It is im- "portant that they should have a religion; they are "not safe neighbours or happy in themselves without "it. But if they have it, it must be leavened," these observers say, "with superstition. Those who speak

"to them must be men who know how to humour "their superstitions, nay, who participate in them. "A necessary incident of the machinery which is "brought to bear upon them may be, that it should "produce violent emotions, hysterical excitements." You must all have heard remarks of this kind; they have a certain air of philosophy, which commends them to some: they justify that which many devout people wish to be justified; these accept them therefore without much examination. In the name of the Gospel, and of the poor, to whom the Gospel was preached at first and should be preached now, I solemnly protest against such arguments. They proceed on the assumption that there is not that in every human being to which truth can address itself; that it must beg help of falsehood in order to make its way. They assume that those who are most prone to superstition are those in whom it ought to be most indulged: whereas they are the very persons whose character it is depraving, whom it is most separating from God, and giving over to the government of impulse and of chance; who most demand all aids and helps that they may be set free from it; who require above all a Deliverer in whom they may trust. If it is feared that there will not be enough of sorrow for past sin, of the struggles and anguish of a spirit feeling its yoke and trying to shake it off, when such a message is delivered, when such a God is proclaimed, Scripture and experience unite to dispel that apprehension.

The feeling that a Father's house has been forsaken, that the monitions of a loving Friend have been continually disregarded, has more power to awaken the sense of bitter wrong, at first of extreme despondency, than all theatrical tricks, than all the inventions of a coarse and noisy rhetoric. No one denies that these will do a work; the question is, what work? One which will make the subject of it more, or less of a man? more, or less of a believer in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? That the Gospel of a Kingdom of Heaven, a Kingdom of Righteousness, Peace, Truth, will bring out all the opposing elements of Unrighteousness, Discord, Falsehood,—that these will wrestle together in each man's heart and in the world,—till the one be victorious and the other put down, we have also assurances from the past and the present, and from witnesses concerning the future who have not deceived us. A very frightful hell will be opened before each man, if we preach, as the Apostles preached, of the mind and will of God from which it seeks to separate us. Every one will feel how near he has been and is to that abyss, what power he needs to save him from descending into it. But the converse assertion is not true. Pictures of torments do not call up visions of justice and goodness. The lurid flames of the bottomless pit give no light by which we may trace our way upwards into the regions of day. To kindle such flames, or at least to produce some mechanical counterfeit of them,

is the expedient which occurs to us all, when we first try to make our neighbours better. We find afterwards that the evil nature, which we share with these neighbours, had much to do with the suggestion of the device; that moral evil, and physical evil too, are things too serious to be played with; that God teaches men what these are, as no words of ours can; that He also teaches and permits us to proclaim what is the escape from them.

And these actual evils are felt by all classes, rich and poor, learned and unlearned—in different measures—but they are essentially the same for all. And this actual deliverance is to be declared to rich and poor, learned and unlearned, with varieties of tone, of diction, of illustration, no doubt; but it is essentially the same for all.

If we understand the need there is for a great moral reformation in the whole land, and in every order of men within it, we shall not be speculating so cleverly about the particular arrangements which are needful, to make an impression upon those who are the least like ourselves, who are susceptible of influences which do not reach us. We, Clergymen, Lawyers, Merchants, should hear the words, "*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,*" continually ringing in our ears, speaking to us not of some other men's offences but of our own, not of some formal acts which we have neglected, but of the falsehood and insincerity to which we have yielded, each

in his own work and vocation, of the powers which we have wasted, of the witness which we might have borne for good, of the aid we have often given to customary and triumphant evil. If we, the priests of the people, spoke more faithfully to you all, we should feel, and you would feel, that these sins press most heavily, not upon those who lie on the outskirts of society, but upon those who are influencing its different movements, who are charged with its different trusts. We should feel that every one, down to the lowest serf of the soil, was suffering for our neglects and misdoings, and might be quickened into a better life if it first began to stir in us.

And for this end nothing is so needful as that we should purge our minds of superstitious vanities; of all those dark thoughts of God which turn us away from Him, and so make Repentance impossible. Trust in Him as the Perfectly Good, Who wills us to repent, Who gives us Repentance, Who works in us by His Spirit that we may repent,—this is what we all want; to this we should be encouraging ourselves and each other. Trust in our schemes, in our wisdom, in our religion, will come to nought. Those who have had most of it in any of these forms will make the most fatal wrecks, will be found most bare and helpless in the trial day. Trust in the Lord God has never failed any one in the age past, and will last for ever, world without end.

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

October 30, 1859.

PSALM CXXXII. 9.

"LET THY PRIESTS BE CLOTHED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND LET THY SAINTS SING WITH JOYFULNESS."

WHAT did these words, 'Priests' and 'Saints,' mean to a Jew? Why does the Psalmist perceive such a close connection between the righteousness of the one and the joy of the other? Are the names obsolete? Have they changed their signification? Do those who bear them still affect one another as they did in the old times? These are the questions I propose to consider this afternoon.

I. A whole book of the Pentateuch is written to tell us what the Jewish priest was, and what work he did. All the books of the Pentateuch throw light upon his vocation. The history of the people, from the beginning to the end of it, is a living commentary upon their priesthood, as upon all their other institutions.

That the priest is first known to us in books of Law,—that Moses called Aaron for *his* helper,—is one indication respecting him which must not be over-

looked. He could appoint nothing, devise nothing. He was told what he had to do. It was clearly shown him from the first what he had not to do. Laws did not issue from him; he did not administer them. He was called out, as every other officer of the commonwealth was called out, to be a witness of the Lord God of Israel,—of Him who was revealing Himself to the nation, delivering them, governing them, feeding them, judging them. The priest had no power whatever to make guesses about Him. If he invented any act of worship, or sanctioned the people in inventing any, he was a transgressor and a rebel. If, through pretence of any higher insight into the Divine purposes, he broke any statute or ordinance, he was as much liable to the punishment which that statute and ordinance had fixed, as the meanest soldier or tiller of the earth.

The offices of the Jewish priest were not apparently different from those of the priests in other lands. Like them, he offered sacrifices for those who felt they had offended against a Divine Ruler. Like them, he offered sacrifices for the whole Nation. Like them, he took cognizance of bodily infirmities, of such especially as were likely to spread through the land. Like them, he kept alive among the people, by his very existence as well as by his acts, the belief in a communion between the invisible and the visible world. Why might he not, on the strength of these services, have assumed all the influence which ever belonged to the

Brahmin? Just because he could not pretend that by certain acts of his he was producing an effect upon the mind of the Being to whom he brought the sacrifice. He was obliged to say, or he set at nought the foundation of his own authority, 'God Himself is 'the author of this sacrifice. He has decreed—I have 'not—this way of confessing your wrong-doings to 'Him. He Himself has proclaimed an Atonement. 'All proceeds, not from you, through me, to Him, but 'from Him, through me, to you. I am but the wit-'ness of the pardon which He gives you, of the peace 'which He makes with you. I am but the channel 'through which it pleases Him to renovate your health 'of body or of spirit.' Those who believe that God actually revealed His mind and will to the chosen Nation, must, of course, think that this honour was really higher than the other. They must feel that for a man to be the witness of an actual union of God with His creatures, of an actual putting away of the wrong that was in them, is far greater and more glorious than for a man to be offering sacrifices, on the chance that they may avert some mischief; intercessions, in a vague, dim hope that they may be heard.

But the success of what we call *Priestcraft* depends on this uncertainty. It is the horrible doubt of what the gods may design against the men whom they have the power to crush to atoms in a moment, which lays the conscious sinner as a crouching slave before him who is likely to know the divine secrets,

who is likely to have guessed the price at which a given amount of wrath can be bought off. It is the absence of fixed laws by which to ascertain the steps of a disease, that makes charms and incantations so much sought for and cherished. So that what we look upon as the distinction of the Jewish priest above the priest of other lands, was exactly that which crippled him when he was ambitious of drawing homage to himself.

Still more was this the case in reference to the public and general sacrifice,—to that great day of Atonement in which not the individual worshiper, but all Israel was interested. For this day proclaimed with a loud voice, that the people whom God by His covenant had declared to be holy, was holy in His eyes still; the sins which had divided it from Him, and which were so manifestly dividing the members of it from each other, were put away, not by some act of theirs, not by some act of the priests, but by His act. This grand service, in strict harmony with all the institutions to which it belonged, denoted that evil was not the normal state of the Nation, but was that which made it abnormal, which withdrew it from its own proper state. The Atonement-day testified that God's will was a reconciling, renovating will, which could bring back the Nation from the misery and slavery into which, through disbelief in His word and assurance concerning it, it had fallen. The Atonement-day testified that the priest was holy, just as every man in the

Nation was holy, because God had chosen him to be His servant, to do his work; and that he was bound to consider himself holy upon that ground and upon no other.

II. And thus then we have arrived at the sense of the other word which the text brings before us. We have learnt, in speaking of the Jewish Priests, what the Jewish Saints were. Were they the good men, the choice men of the land, those who stand out in such broad and startling contrast to the stiff-necked race about them? Surely they were these; but then only because they were Israelites, and believed themselves to be Israelites, and claimed the rights of Israelites. Therein—as I have often pointed out to you from a multitude of passages in the Bible, from the context of the history—lay their difference from those who were full of all corruption and baseness, from the most sensual of the kings, from the most proud and contemptuous of the Pharisees. *These* stood apart from their kind; *these* would not rest upon the common privileges of children of Abraham; *these* would wrap themselves in their earthly distinctions or their spiritual distinctions, and would not understand that they were merely trustees of both for the whole society of which they were members. And so, if they took to themselves the title of Saints, they were destroying their only claim to that title; they were doing what in them lay to destroy their countrymen's claim to it.

For the Israelites—so the prophets tell them—were

chosen by God to be a holy Nation, that they might be witnesses to all Nations concerning Him and His character and His purposes. The Israelites were to let all know that a self-willed Power was not ruling over the Universe; that they must not attribute its evils to an Evil Creator; that a right and just King was upholding their kingdoms; that all the wrong and injustice of visible kings and of peoples was warring against Him; that He would prevail against them; that He would reveal Himself as the Judge and Monarch of the whole earth. The prophets complained of them that they did not fulfil this work; that the heathens were more faithful to their gods whom they did not know, than they were to the God who had chosen them to be a people of inheritance to Himself; that they were proud of their Temple and disgraced the Temple; that by reason of them the name of God was blasphemed in all lands. They were a nation of saints, choosing to be a nation of sinners.

III. The prophets who bring these charges against the Nation generally, trace many of its worst corruptions to the priests. *They* represented the holiness of the Nation; if they ever began to fancy that the holiness was their own, that it belonged to them as members of a caste, by hereditary right, one can fancy how soon security would take the place of vigilance, how easily they would learn to look in other men for the evils that were getting full possession of their own hearts, how gladly they would escape from the dreary routine

of duties that had no meaning for them, to coarse animal indulgences. The effect of such spectacles in lowering the tone of the people at large, would be gradual and certain. Even those who did not witness them, or give credit to them, might yet feel that nothing in the Universe was so lifeless, so monotonous, as the worship of God. Then some would value themselves upon their going through this worship because they found it a penance; others would seek a wild delight in whatever was most alien from such a service. Then pleasures would themselves become a hard business, like the acts of religion. The pursuit of money, by honest means or base, would become the end of existence. In proportion as it prompted to crimes, there would come a fear of consequences which would be mistaken for a fear of God. A joyless, thankless spirit would be diffused through all hearts; visible on all countenances. Everywhere there would be a sense of death and a dread of it; a glow of life scarcely anywhere.

That such a state of things might not overtake his land—or, if it had begun, it might cease—the Psalmist prayed, "*Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness.*" "*Let thy saints sing with joyfulness.*" 'If 'thy priests regard Thee, not as a hard Power whom 'they are obliged to serve, but as a Righteous Being 'whom it is good to serve; if Right be the object 'which they set before them, and love to contem-'plate, till it becomes the habit of their spirits; if

'they do not boast of it as their own, but confess it 'as Thine, and so become partakers of it as we par-'take of the sun which shines over us and the air 'which we breathe; then will there be a joy and li-'berty diffused through all Thy people; then will 'they feel themselves to be indeed Thy saints, a holy 'people, sealed, consecrated, sacrificed to Thee; then 'will they set forth thy Name wherever they go, 'in whatever work they are engaged; then will all 'the families of the earth receive a blessing from 'them.'

IV. My brethren, I cannot see, as I have often told you, that the name Priest, in the sense in which I have just represented it, the sense of the Jewish Scriptures, has lost any of its force, any of its worth, for us. It seems to me that all which the Jew knew of the name was good and healthy; that what he wanted was the full knowledge of all that the office implied, the full power of performing its functions. Till the complete and voluntary sacrifice of the Son of Man and the Son of God had been offered; till the complete atonement of Heaven and Earth had been made and ratified; till the perfect representative of man at the right-hand of God had been revealed; till all mankind and the whole Universe had been declared to stand in Him,—the priest could only bear half the testimony he was meant to bear on earth; he could only offer up a feeble sacrifice and broken intercession for his race to the Father of all. Then, when

he knew that there was a High Priest who was always presenting our nature before God, who was always manifesting God's nature to us; then, when he knew that the highest Sacrifice was that which God Himself had made, and that men's sacrifices are good by the working of God's Spirit in them; then, when they had been taught that the work of the Mediator and Head of the whole family, while He was wearing a mortal body, was to cure sickness, and conquer death, —then indeed he would feel that every duty of the Jewish priest was his, and that if some of them were delegated to other ministers, those, the physicians of the land, had a priestly trust, and were executing a priestly service. And so far as he understood these high functions to be his, so far I conceive he would not thrust himself into any office which was not his; so far he would be reluctant to mix himself with matters of ordinary administration, knowing that they had been assigned to other functionaries, and that he should weaken all the dignity and sacredness of their work as well as of his own if he confused them, and should bring equal mischief into both.

V. In like manner, I should contend that the Jewish idea of Saintship is the one which the Apostles, who were Jews, naturally adopted into the New Testament phraseology, and that any other which has been substituted for it is feebler and narrower. They who had believed themselves to be parts of a called Nation,— who had been told that it was a sin to think other-

wise,—now claimed all who were baptized in Christ's name as Saints, chosen of God; and told them that it was a sin to think otherwise. And, as they had understood that their special Nation was chosen to be a witness to all Nations of the Living and Righteous God, and that it was about to be cast out because it had refused to be such a witness, so they held that the Church, scattered in different cities, formed out of Jews and Heathens, was chosen to be a witness to all men that the Righteous God was their Father, and had adopted them in His Only-begotten Son, and had bidden them renounce all their separate idolatries, and had given them His Spirit that they might become One Family. Each Church in its own city or nation, so they appear to have thought, would do its work in the world so far as it held this faith; each member of the Church would do his own special work so far as he held it. How, then, could they alter the signification of the name Saint, or limit it to a set of particularly exalted individuals, or do anything but let it expand itself, just as in all other respects the Gospel had expanded the Old Economy?

VI. But if the name retain this old divine force,—subject to this inevitable dilatation,—so also, I conceive, is there the same connection as in former days between the unrighteousness of the Priests and the joylessness of the Saints or the Church; so is the prayer of the Psalmist still the one which we have most need to offer: "Let thy Priests be clothed with

righteousness, and let thy Saints sing with joyfulness." Throughout the history of modern Europe this truth, I think, is written in sunbeams, that the degeneracy of the Priesthood is the main cause of the degeneracy of the Nations: and this other, that the degeneracy of the Priesthood is always connected with unbelief in the Righteousness of God; with a low estimate of that which He demands of His Priests, and of the trusts which He has committed to them; with an eager desire to claim powers which He has not committed to them, and which they are incapable of exercising.

VII. You will anticipate the application of these remarks which the circumstances of the present time suggest. All men, whatever their opinions may be, feel and confess that the most embarrassing of the complications which disturb the minds of kings, emperors, nations, at this time, is the one which refers to what we have been used to call the States of the Church. Every one feels that, whatever other questions are remotely involved in that subject, this is directly involved in it,—whether priests have shown themselves to be even moderately good civil administrators, and whether the inhabitants of the Papal territory shall be forced to receive them still in that capacity. About the answer to the first of those questions, I suppose only a small minority of men in England would express any doubt. Without appealing to the evidence of any recent French writers, they

would count the almost uniform testimony of impartial travellers of all countries to be decisive. But we ought, I think, in fairness, to confess that the proof is not confined to one country, or age, or mode of faith. With very few exceptions indeed, wherever the same experiment has been made, whether the name Priest has been accepted or diligently eschewed, the results have been in all essentials the same. And this confession must be made simply and broadly. In all countries and ages alike there has been a craving in the Priests to try whether they could not undertake the tasks for which experience appeared to proclaim them incompetent. Archbishop Laud speaks of it as his last and crowning effort for the Church, that he succeeded in making Bishop Juxon the Lord Treasurer. How far that and similar attempts to render the English kingdom sacerdotal contributed to the stability of his master's throne, history may explain. What, again, was the government of the ministers of the Kirk in Scotland, during the minority of James VI., and again, when they proclaimed Charles Stuart King? what would have been the actions of the Westminster Assembly, if they had not been checked by Cromwell, but the most tyrannical and abortive attempts at civil rule by ecclesiastics? These are examples—and they might be multiplied indefinitely—which show that neither the impulse to desire this kind of rule, nor the consequences which proceed from it, are confined to Ro-

manist countries,—they are at work in all of us; it is God's great mercy, if we are withheld from indulging the passion and enduring the punishment.

VIII. These reflections ought to prevent us from adopting any harsh and contemptuous language, when we see Roman Catholic clergymen and prelates clinging with intense tenacity to what strikes us as the most worthless of shadows, as the most dangerous exhibition of the weakness of a Power which they suppose has a right to govern the world. We have no right to judge them, lest we should be judged. If we understand our own position, we cannot wish that they should separate the idea of a Vicar of Christ over the Universe from the attendant notion of his dominion over a little local Principality, because it would seem to be the Will of God that the falsity of the grand doctrine should be made manifest through the practical comment which is supplied by the anomalies and contradictions of the petty experiment. But what I have said this afternoon may suggest another reason why we should be careful of allowing any party or personal feelings to disturb a controversy in which the interests of one nation—nay, of all nations,—are deeply involved.

The effect of what Italians see around them, the effect of what they hear from Protestant theologians and Liberal politicians, is to make them regard the very name and character of a priest with hatred or else scorn. Yet this is not a natural state of mind

for any people, certainly not for any Southern people. Woe to those, no doubt, through whom the offence has come; but it is an offence: much loss may follow from it; the gain is doubtful. An extinction of reverence for that which has been long and habitually reverenced, must be terrible immediately; a reaction of gross superstition is certain to succeed. May it not be, that what the priests of that land and of all lands want, is not a sense of the meanness of their office, but of its grandeur and awfulness? May it not be that they have never considered how little power is needed to degrade and stupify a people, how much and what divine power is needed to elevate them, and make them free and just and wise? May it not be that they have been mistaken, not in saying that they had received their functions and gifts from God Himself, but in forgetting who He is, in what character and in what relation to man He has revealed Himself, what He has declared His purposes towards them to be? May there not one day be an awakening in the minds of some of these priests of the belief that they are charged with a mighty commission, to keep alive in men's minds the sense of a Perfect Reconciliation, and a Finished Sacrifice, and a never-ending Communion between God and His creatures,—that all these ends have been dwarfed, and their influence made ineffectual or mischievous, because they have supposed that *they* were to effect the reconciliation, that *they* were to make the sacrifice, that *they*

were to create the communion? May there not be humble men upon whose hearts the light of this discovery, painful even to agony at first, is just dawning; a light not shining from any Northern torches, but coming forth at God's own word? May we not be sure that, as they gaze upon it, they will more and more abjure the silly ambition of grasping at an authority so much poorer than that which they are endowed with already, and which they are privileged to put forth? May they not readily confess that a priest, who aspires to be a policeman, must be a very bad policeman, because he has first consented to be a bad priest?

My friends, it may seem to some of you strange and ridiculous that I should speak of such a conviction, working in some poor friar, in some lonely cell, as if it might at last be the means of cutting a knot which monarchs and statesmen are not able to untie. But is there no historical experience to support such a dream? I do not know what power or wit may be at work in the councils of Europe, civil or ecclesiastical, at this time; but I do not suppose there is more power or more wit than were engaged in settling the condition of Italy and the Popedom and mankind, when Charles V. and Francis I. and Leo X. were occupying themselves with that problem. Surely the monarch of a country which had recently overrun and occupied the sacred soil,—the lord of Spain and Germany and the Indies,—the

man who brought all the craft and all the learning of the Medicean house to sustain the cause of the Holy See, and to relieve it from the scandal of promoting ignorance,—might have succeeded, if any could, in finding some adjustment of the difficulties which beset the commencement of the sixteenth century. And yet you know that these mighty forces were all thrown into confusion, and that the whole question of Italy and of Europe assumed a new form, because a miner's son, a poor monk, was led to cry aloud, in the bitterness of his soul, "Lord, I am one of Thy priests, yet "I am not righteous. Oh that Thou wouldst clothe "me with a righteousness that is Thine, and not "mine!" and because that poor monk, when he had found a deliverance for himself, declared to all his fellow-sufferers that it was the unrighteousness of the priest which crushed all hope among men, and made it impossible for God's saints to sing with joyfulness. That message sounded through all lands; that prayer went up from multitudes of hearts. And though the Reformation which followed was imperfect and limited, yet it was such a one as all the contrivances of all the Sovereigns in Christendom could not have wrought.

There is nothing wild or irrational in the supposition that the like causes may produce like effects in our times. Our business however is not with anticipations, but with facts; not first with other lands, but first with our own. Intelligent foreigners who

travel in England, and mix with the most cultivated classes in it, probably hear remarks about us not very unlike what we hear from them about their priests. There may not be the same fear of the English priest; he may be looked upon as tamed and domesticated, his wings too much clipped to allow of his making any very dangerous flights. Still there will be complaints, painful because too just, sometimes of our impotence, sometimes of our pretentiousness; of our effort to cultivate and spread a morality which is not based on the broad and practical distinction between right and wrong; of our appealing to the weaker elements in human nature, and repudiating the strong and vital; of our ignoble contentions; of our injustice to all who lie beyond our circle, often to those who are within it. When we hear such things, or find that they are spoken out of our hearing, we are as often tempted, I suspect, to side with our accusers, as to take up a position of defence; to admit all that is said of the necessary abuses of a priestly order; to put in special pleas of exception in our own cases; possibly to recriminate on other classes, which, we say, if ours is bad, cannot show themselves to be better. Such apologies, however natural, are, I conceive, unmanly and unlawful. No one has a right to say—no one can dare to say, if he knows himself, and reviews his own acts fairly—that he is exempt from any one of the evils to which his order has been prone, that he, so far as opportunity has served, has not fallen into

them. No one has a right to say that the fault lies with his office and not with him. Each of us ought to magnify that office, to feel the vastness of its responsibilities, the sevenfold gifts with which it is encircled, the mighty work for our land and for all lands which it might help to perform, if the stewards to whom it is committed were found faithful. Do not, I beseech you, my lay brethren, seek to divest us of that faith, or to weaken it in us; for your own sake strive hard to deepen and confirm it. If we have it rooted and grounded in us, we shall honour your professions, and shall conjure you to honour them more, and count them more sacred than you have ever done; that so you may be delivered from all the pettinesses and chicaneries and vanities which accompany the low appreciation of their object and their nature. If we ask earnestly that God's priests may be righteous, we shall extend much further than we are wont to extend the definition of His saints. We shall tell you that you are, one and all, called and sealed to be His soldiers and servants; one and all bound to consider yourselves members of a holy Nation; one and all bound, in your different vocations, to see that that nation is fulfilling the work to which it is set apart. We shall tell you that you are bound to take part with us in a holy war against all that is degrading our English life and our English righteousness; that you are bound to show all the countries which are subject to our sway or within the

range of our influence, that they have a righteous God, a loving Father, over them, and so to deliver them from their miseries and oppressions, so to make them sing with joyfulness.

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

November 6, 1859.

2 Peter iii. 13.

"NEVERTHELESS WE, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE, LOOK FOR A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS."

The language of the Bible, if it is the book which we believe it to be, must be simple language, adapted to people of all conditions and in all circumstances. But it is not certain that what we assume to be the simplest and most natural interpretation of this language is actually the simplest and most natural. It may have been derived from habits of ours which are very artificial. Or it may have been adopted without reflection upon the context and upon similar passages. Where these have been examined, we may discover that there is a sense in them quite as near to us, quite as capable of ordinary illustration, far richer, fuller, more helpful in the work of our lives.

Thus it has happened, I think, with the words '*new*' and '*change*' in the Scriptures. 'New' is, of course, opposed in these, as in all other books, to 'old;' 'change' is opposed to 'continuance.' And

a new thing *may* be one which we have never seen or had any connection with. Change *may* be the substitution of one thing for another. This, we are probably inclined to think, is the obvious force of the adjective and the substantive. But does a man speak in a strange or unusual dialect, who says, when he is coming out of his chamber after an illness, 'How 'new all things are to me; I feel as if I had a new life in me'? Or may we not say of another man, without exciting any great surprise, 'What a happy 'change has taken place in him! His gloom has 'passed away. He is what we remember him ten 'or twenty years ago'? Clearly the first of the expressions does not intimate in the least that the man had never breathed the air before. The feeling which he calls 'new' would lose all its delight if it were not the very counterpart of one which he has had before; it would lose much of its delight if the objects around him were not familiar objects. He who in this sense says that the world is all new to him, might fully adopt the poet's words :—

> "My eyes are dim with childish tears,
> My heart is idly stirred,
> For the same sound is in my ears
> Which in those days I heard."

And surely, when we speak thankfully of a change in ourselves or in others, we do not mean that they or we have lost our identity. All the thanksgiving would depart—a kind of shivering and horror would

take the place of it—if that thought could by possibility enter our minds.

Now which of these meanings—both, I admit, possible—is most likely to be St. Peter's when he speaks of a "*new Heaven and a new earth*"? It may be better, before we answer that question, to recall a few other sentences in which this or some cognate word presents itself.

I. I will not reckon among these the phrase, "*Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's;*" though I suspect that that verse might throw great light on the beautiful Psalm in which it is found, and upon the whole subject. I prefer however to take some of the passages which appear to require the opposite interpretation. None is more important than that of St. Paul, in which he exhorts his Ephesian disciples to put off the old man and to put on the new. Beyond all doubt, this language denotes the casting away of something which was nearer to them than their garments, the appropriating something altogether different from that, which was thenceforth to become no less one with them than it had been. But what is it which is to be cast away? It is "*the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.*" A vile, withered, decayed thing had been formed by a series of low, grovelling desires. It checked all growth, life, breathing. This might now be thrown aside. The man himself might throw it aside as a vile excres-

cence. And what is to be put on? "*The new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*" It is the true essential humanity, God's original creation, now manifested in Christ, into which the man may enter, which he has a right to claim. His youth may be renewed like the eagle's. He is not to ask for something novel or rare. He wants the permanent, the eternal, which was always with him, and which the old man, restless in the pursuit of novelties and rarities, was always hiding from him. The more you meditate on this passage, the more, I think, you will see that the sense which I have clumsily and feebly endeavoured to bring out, is contained in it.

How is it with that other passage, in which the same Apostle says of himself and of his brother-Christians, "*Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*"? Does he wish us to understand that the things themselves, the objects, did not exist before? Or does he utter exactly the feeling of the man who was rising out of a fever: 'How new all things are! The sun and sky instead 'of the curtains of the bed! The fresh breezes in-'stead of the atmosphere of sickness! And then what 'new clearness, significance, proportion! We have 'been looking at everything with jaundiced eyes, co-'louring them with our morbid feelings; now we can 'behold them as they really are.'

If we test St. Paul's phraseology by two or three

instances such as these, we need not doubt that we have found the clue to it in a number of others. For it is not loose and accidental, however fervent it is, however free from formality; the more you examine it, the more will you be surprised by its consistency, the more will apparent exceptions fall under the general law. But I will take one example more. It is that we all know so well, where he says, "*The trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*" A great writer of our day, who has a marvellous power of presenting us his inmost experiences, but who sometimes perhaps allows his imagination to supply the defects of his memory, has described in fearfully glowing language the horror with which he listened to these words as a young child, when they were read at the funeral of a much-loved sister, nearly of his own age. The thought that she was to become another than that creature whom he had known, and to whom he had been so intensely attached, he says, overwhelmed him utterly. And, I think, with good reason. If the interpretation of the boy, or of the man imputing his thoughts to the boy, had been the true one, the sounds would be crushing to the heart of every mourner. But if we consider them attentively, we shall be convinced that their meaning is not only not this, but is the very reverse of this. He is affirming with the utmost vehemence the permanence of the human substance, even of the human body, through

all vicissitudes. "*Thou fool,*" he says to him who asks with *what* body the new and perfected man will come, "*that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed its own body.*" How could he speak otherwise? His argument is, that in the death and resurrection of our Lord we read the law under which all human creatures are placed. If we are not to rise, he argues boldly, "*Christ is not risen.*" Now it would have been anguish to him to have thought that the face, which it blinded his eyes to look upon when he was on his way to Damascus, was not really that face which had been marred more than any man's in Gethsemane and on Calvary. It was a necessity of his faith to acknowledge the identity of Christ in all possible changes, from the cradle in Bethlehem till His body had entered into the glory which He had with His Father before the worlds were. How then could he doubt the identity, through all circumstances of birth, growth, decay, renovation, of any one who had been made a living soul like the first Adam, and who had received the quickening spirit of the second Adam?

II. We are to inquire then, now, whether St. Peter's language in the text is formed upon the same model as St. Paul's, or whether it is to be explained upon the

opposite principle to his? Are we to suppose that the new Heaven and the new Earth are like the new man, like the things which had become new, like the new glorious body into which the body of humiliation was to be transfigured? Or did St. Peter expect another Heaven and Earth—a substitution of other objects, for those among which he had dwelt, and with which he had conversed? I have no doubt that this last is the impression which the passage makes upon a great many; probably at some time of our lives this has been the impression it has made upon us all. There is hazard in rudely assaulting an opinion under which a precious jewel may be hidden, which may be interwoven with expectations that those who hold it can ill afford to lose. But there is hazard also in allowing our minds to remain vague and confused, grasping at we know not what, supposing that what is given us is not what we want. Out of such a state of feeling, however it may justify itself by the phrases of Scripture, come weariness and restlessness, at last indifference and unbelief.

(1.) St. Peter says, "*We, according to His* PROMISE, *look for a new Heaven and a new Earth.*" Obviously, our method of ascertaining what he understood by the new heaven and new earth is to inquire what the promises are to which he alludes. The first and most natural reference is to the passage in Isaiah, which must have been in his mind when he wrote the words. It is found in the sixty-fifth chapter, at the seventeenth

verse: "*For, behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard, nor the voice of crying.*" When you heard that clause, "*the former things shall not be remembered,*" you might suppose that the prophet at least was expecting a heaven and earth that should have no association with anything that he had known or cared for. But look at his words again. See how full they are of Jerusalem, the home of his childhood, the city of his fathers. Observe how all his hopes turn upon her deliverance from her sorrows, upon the full establishment of God's kingdom within her. Observe also how he comments on his previous rapture in the twenty-second verse of the sixty-sixth chapter: "*For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.*" So that this heaven and earth which are to be, are directly, formally, connected with the continuance of his own people, with the permanence of the seed of Israel; nay, if we take the words as they stand, of their very name. Fix the time and mode of the accomplishment of the prediction as you will, you cannot say that it could be accomplished, unless everything that had been dearest and most sacred to him

were vindicated and preserved, unless the influences and causes which had threatened its existence and vitality were taken away and remembered no more.

This was one of the books upon which St. Peter had been nourished from his childhood,—which had grown dearer to him, as he recognized the Person who is the subject of it, no longer in vision, but clothed with the form and undergoing the sufferings of a man,—the words of which came back to him in all their power, as he looked forward to a crisis which should reveal that divine and human sufferer as King of the nation which had rejected Him, and of the world. And we have seen that, unless he dissented altogether from the old teacher of his land, unless he tortured his language into a sense the very opposite of that in which it had been first used, he must have given just that force to the word 'new,' in connection with the heaven and the earth, which St. Paul gave to it when he spoke of the regenerated man and the risen body.

(2.) Think, again, how inconsistent any other use of the adjective would have been with the import which he must always have attached to the *first* noun which it qualifies. He had heard among the Rabbis of different heavens, of a heaven of the heavens. Of this lore perhaps he might not have taken in much. But he had been in his ship on the Lake of Galilee on clear starry nights. The words of Scripture respecting the firmament had come to him. It had spoken to him of fixedness, permanence, calmness. If he had been

like the people on whom his land bordered, he would have bowed down and worshiped those symbols of what he needed most, of what the spirit within him sighed for most. He was forbidden to do that. He had been told that there was One from whom the light came,—One who is and was and is to come,—and that these bright, beautiful forms are but the works of His hands. The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who had made a covenant with his fathers, had caused the sun and moon and stars to shine. He had fixed them in their courses. From Him came the light that made all things visible, and the heat that made all things to grow and bring forth.

Thus the heavens which he saw were witnesses to the Jew—the Psalmist had told him that they were witnesses to the ends of the earth—of One whom he could not see, but with whom he might hold converse, in whom he might seek a refuge from all the vicissitudes and confusions of the things about him, and of his own heart. The prophets had spoken of the heaven as His throne, His habitation. They had spoken of all spirits that were doing His commandment, hearkening to the voice of His word, as Heavenly Powers. And yet they had taught also, that He dwelt among men, that He filled the Temple which Solomon had built, that He met His people there. And now this language had received a new life, had acquired a deeper and clearer sense: for One who dwelt in Galilee, who was called a car-

penter's son, had spoken of a Kingdom of Heaven; had told his disciples that it was nigh to them; had sent them to tell their countrymen of it; had enabled them to give signs of its nature by healing their diseases, by delivering them from the power of evil. He had removed the barriers of space and time which hid it from men; for He had said "*No man hath ascended up into Heaven but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man that is in Heaven.*" Was it *this* Heaven, then, that was to pass away, or be changed to some other? *this* kingdom, which ruled over all; *this*, of which the very characteristics were permanence, endurance, eternity? The question answers itself. If this was the blessing which the Apostle looked for, he was setting at nought all that God had been teaching him from his infancy, through his occupation, through the divine books, through the words of Jesus, through the Spirit that was to abide with His disciples for ever and to bring all past things to their remembrance.

You will say, then, that he meant not *this*, but the visible heavens, those which were and are symbols only of the divine presence and eternity. Assuredly I believe he did look for the passing away of all that is merely shadowy, of all that merely appears to us other than it is. We in this age believe that the visible heaven, the firmament over our heads, has an appearance to us which misleads us; that the actual sun and stars are not what our sense reports to us that

they are. It would be no shock to our minds, but rather a great relief and deliverance to them, to believe, that some day the senses will *not* deceive us as they do; that they will perform their appointed and excellent functions, and obtain a freedom and power which they have never had; but that they will not any longer place themselves between us and the truth of things, to disfigure and distort it.

That would be a change indeed. Think how much is involved in it; think also, and more earnestly still, what must precede it. Upon this point I think St. Peter's words will afford us some guidance, if first we clear our minds of a notion respecting the *Earth* which haunts us all, and which we often sanctify with religious names and titles, though I believe our conscience and the Scriptures utter a protest against it.

(3.) We speak scornfully and disparagingly of this earth, as if it were a fit place for poor, fallen, wicked creatures to inhabit; but as if those whom the Spirit makes meet for the Kingdom of Heaven are to look down upon it; at best to regard it only as a place in which they are compelled for threescore and ten years to dwell. These words stand out often in the strongest contrast to the acts of those who use them; sometimes one would think they were determined to established the truth of their sayings, and prove how wretched the things of earth by the preference which they exhibit for the very meanest and most frivolous of them; especially by their devotion to the earth's

money, the love of which is said to be the root of all evil. And so I believe it must be more and more, if we are not taught reverence for the earth as an article of faith; if it is not declared to us more and more, that the Bible commands this reverence, gives us the strongest and most sacred reasons for it; warns us against the sins into which we must fall when we esteem it lightly. The earth, so the old Hebrews believed, is a grand and awful place, which God has created and cared for, and pronounced very good; which he watches over; the defilers and destroyers of which, whosoever they be, He punishes and will cast out. And those who say that this old belief has been changed by the Gospel, that St. Peter held it less strongly than Isaiah, cannot believe in their heart that the Son of God actually walked this earth, and blessed it, and wept over it, and spent all His days in healing the plagues and curses which were afflicting the inhabitants of it. They cannot think the Incarnation of Christ is really what in our creeds and confessions we declare it to be: else they must suppose that it was the vindication and redemption of this earth for its Creator; the sentence upon those who supposed that it was theirs, and that they might use it for the purposes of their coveteousness and ambition; upon those also who declared it to be the Devil's, and were ready to hold different portions of it as his liegemen and tributaries.

No! St. Peter believed that the earth had been

made evil by those who inhabited it, just because they did not recognise its relation to, and dependence upon, the Kingdom of Heaven: just because they denied that there was one Lord of both; a Lamb that was slain upon earth, a Lamb that was worshiped amidst the Hosts of Heaven. So Heaven suffered as much as earth: one became cold and dark, removed from sympathy, the capital of a tyrant's throne; the other became the prey of the bad men and the bad spirits, who supposed that God had left it their mercy.

(4.) St. Peter did not believe that the Heavens were the seat of a tyrant's throne, as the Romans believed, as the Jews believed. He did not believe that the earth was left under its curse, and was meant to be a habitation of oppressors, visible or invisible. And therefore he looked, according to God's promise, for a new Heaven and a new Earth, "*wherein dwelleth Righteousness.*" There is the explanation of his assurance; by that word his belief and his hope were to be tested. He was sure that Christ had revealed a kingdom of absolute Righteousness; that He had shown the Ruler of the armies of Heaven to be the Righteous One. He might go forth with that Gospel to the Nations. He might proclaim the crucified Man to be the one image of the invisible God. He might declare that in Him that invisible God was the father of the whole Families of the earth. Just so far as that Gospel was received would there be a new Heaven; that old Heaven, in which powers of Nature, capricious gods, sometimes

oppressors, sometimes deliverers, governing by fear, not justice, had passed away, and would not be remembered. A Righteous Being, who by all His judgments, by all His blessings, is seeking to make men righteous, to form them after His image, would be confessed and adored. And then there would also be a new earth. Man, the minister of His purposes, would no longer thwart those purposes, would no more outrage His divine and blessed laws, would no more set himself up as an independent satrap, to make laws for himself and the Universe, and, so far as in him lay, to mar and destroy both. And all the blessed processes of God, fiery processes often, for purifying and renewing the earth, for making it what He designed it to be, for casting out of it whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie, would work freely and mightily. And it would be seen that the earth had been foully and ungratefully reviled, when it was declared not to be a fit habitation for the Saints of God, who, if we believe the New Testament, can have no higher and more blessed occupation than to assist in working out the intentions of God for it, in bringing it within the range and compass of Christ's Redemption and Sacrifice.

(5.) In the midst of an Apostate Jewish Nation, in the midst of a world ruled by Nero, St. Peter held fast this hope. And very soon he will have discovered, as we believe, that it was a hope which did not make ashamed, and that he had not followed a cunningly

devised fable. There came an hour,—it may have been on a cross, like his Master,—when the earth passed away as a scroll from his eyes, when the elements seemed to melt with fervent heat, when all that he had seen was for him dissolved. And then he knew that the visible framework of the Heavens on which he had gazed was not the Heavens indeed. And then he knew that all the corruption and tyranny and falsehood which he had witnessed on earth did not constitute this earth, but were only that which vexed and disturbed it. And then the true Heaven of Righteousness, which he had seen imperfectly, as through a glass darkly, but which he *had* seen in the Only-begotten of the Father, will have stood out in all its fullness and perfection. And will he not have seen then also a new earth? Will not the hills and valleys and lakes, amidst which he had lived in his childhood, have been clothed with a new and celestial beauty? Will he not have looked into them then, instead of only looking upon them? Will there have been one line in the old picture wanting? And yet will not all have become new? He had once trodden that ground, following His Master,—sometimes in rash confidence, sometimes trembling and amazed. How will he now feel all those spots of earth, and every part of it, glowing with that presence! How he will have known that Christ was in the midst of that earth, and of those who were gathered together upon it in His Name, and that He would be till the end!

Such visions, or rather, such fulfilments of their earthly visions, we may believe were granted to those members of that company of just men made perfect, whom we have been remembering this week. And surely we may believe also that they, or some of them, may have power to look on, and see how the events that pass us by so rapidly, and that we heed so little, have all been removing some hindrance to the full manifestation of that new Heaven and new Earth,—that true Heaven and true Earth, which our sins are shutting out from us. They may see how all the course of History, all the brave deeds of good men and all the crimes of evil men, have been contributing to reveal and establish that Righteousness by which all unrighteousness shall be overcome; how every passage in national or individual life has been a divine judgment, understood or overlooked by those who were passing through it; how each judgment is a step to that final judgment which shall divide for ever between the false and the true.

III. But whatever insight or foresight may be vouchsafed to those who have left the world, there are lessons for us who are in it which we should lay to heart. The first I shall speak of is a negative one. It concerns what we have *not* to expect. You cannot be ignorant that there is much excitement at this time on the subject of prophecy; that events of a very appalling kind are said to be near at hand; that some are trembling at the thought that perhaps the earth is approaching the time of its destruction;

(1.) Now the study of prophecy, I conceive, may be a most healthy study, provided we remember that the true prophets of God always connected the future with the past and the present; that their main object was to teach their countrymen that in God's government nothing happens by chance; that they lived to assert a Right Order, which must triumph at last over all that is wrong. If we observe these laws of prophecy, we shall remember that all times and seasons are not laws but accidents, and that about them we must be liable to continual mistakes, the meditation upon it will strengthen all our resolutions, deepen our thoughts of what is going on around us, make all our actions more serious and consistent. Especially we shall be less slaves of the newsmonger and quidnunc. Every event will have solemnity and importance as one of a long series which must be leading to an issue; no event will be in itself a mere subject for idle wonderment. We shall feel that every moment is a critical moment; that God's judgments are always proceeding; that the eternal is always standing side by side with the changeable and temporary; that our own times are the gravest of all times, because all which have gone before have been contributing to give them their character for good and for evil. But there is a study of prophecy which is just the reverse of this, and produces exactly the opposite effects on the character. It keeps alive a habit of guessing about the future; it fastens on some special incidents,

perhaps of little significance in themselves, because they chime in with some favourite theory of the interpreter; it dislocates and disorganizes history; it subjects Scripture to the freaks of private and party interpretation; it becomes a tool in the hands of those who trade in panics; it confuses the minds of good and weak people with vague fears of some change and subversion which is to befall the universe, and which, though they call it God's judgment, they dread as if it were to be the work of an Evil Spirit; it leads to the neglect of homely duties and common morality. And as it has this effect upon the well disposed, who, if they were under sound teaching, might act well, it strengthens the evil in the conviction that all things continue the same as they were from the foundation of the world, and that they may safely go on with their cheats and lies, seeing that there is no actual order in the world, or that it is unable to assert itself, or that God has some maxims of His own which have nothing to do with the vindication of Justice and the discovery and extirpation of Injustice. I believe many of these errors will be corrected, and the evil consequences of them removed, if we thoroughly and distinctly assure ourselves that what we look for is not another Heaven and another Earth, different in principles from the Heaven which is ruling us now, from the Earth in which God has placed us now.

(2.) But it is equally necessary that we should

expect a *new* Heaven and a *new* Earth wherein dwelleth Righteousness. It is most desirable that we should remind ourselves day by day, and hour by hour, of that mighty change which God has promised that He will effect by laying bare every deception and falsehood and hypocrisy to which we are any of us yielding, and by bringing forth His Truth into full light and manifestation. That is the terror we are to set before ourselves and before our brethren. That is the hope we are to set before ourselves and our brethren. It is a terror, for there is that in each of us which cleaves to deception, to falsehood, to hypocrisy, and therefore to perdition. It is a hope, for there is that in each of us—there is a spirit in our race—which longs for deliverance from fraud and deception and hypocrisy, which cries out for the living God of Righteousness. To assure that bad Nature of ours that it must be disappointed; that it is married to the evil, which is under God's eternal curse,—a curse that shall be executed to the uttermost; to assure that better spirit within us, that its highest hopes are below that which God has promised,—this is the preacher's duty; this is every man's duty. And, oh! my friends, will not that be indeed a new Heaven, in which we shall see only a Perfect Love that has sacrificed itself for its enemies? Will not that be a new earth, in which the robber and spoiler shall prevail no more,—which the meek who inherit it now shall rule alone and for ever?

Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

November 13, 1859.

JOHN XIV. 27.

"PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU: NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU."

THESE words were spoken to the Apostles on the night of our Lord's betrayal. A few hours after they had received this gift of peace, their souls were in more awful disquietude than they had ever been. They saw Him, in whom they trusted that He should redeem Israel, delivered up to the heathen. Their own rulers condemned Him; no hosts of Angels appeared to rescue Him; presently they themselves forsook Him and fled. That last act must have added to all their other sorrows the sharpest stings of conscience. They had not only lost Him, but themselves. The Cross and the grave did not separate Him from them so much as the recollection that they had proved false to Him.

How strangely must the thought, 'He said, I leave you peace, I give you peace,' have mingled with these confusions! What peace had He bequeathed to them? Where was it? How could they claim it?

Nothing seemed further from them than this. Nay, there was something yet more fearful in their minds: He who gave them peace, had seemed himself to lose it. They had seen Him in the Agony of the Garden; they heard the cry upon the Cross. Was it not one of conflict and anguish? Did it not seem as if the whole world were at war with Him, and as if He were forsaken by His Father?

And yet, brethren, these were the very hours which interpreted to the Disciples the words they had heard, but not understood, at the Last Supper; to these they must have turned in all their after-life, when they would consider the nature and reality and fullness of the blessing which our Lord assured to them.

I. "*Peace* I leave with you." What! peace with the people about them,—with the rulers of the synagogue, with proconsuls or emperors? He had warned them in this very discourse that all these would carry on with them a continual war. He had come into the world with a sword. His Gospel would divide men asunder, in the same nation, in the same household. He had told them this that they might not be offended. It was strange that when they preached of mercy and goodwill to men, they should stir up rage and hatred. But He said it would be so, and they found it was so. The peace then which He spoke of must be something different from external ease and quietness. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," was part of His legacy. But did it

mean that they should have peace within their own circle, if there was war in the world? For a few months or weeks after the day of Pentecost they might have thought this gift was really theirs. They had all things common; they ate their bread with joy and singleness of heart. But soon there arose in that infant community heartburnings and hypocrisies; widows of Greek proselytes murmuring against the Hebrews, because they were neglected in the daily ministration; men and women seeking to deceive men and God by boasting that they had laid the whole price of their possessions at the Apostles' feet when they had kept back a part. Speedily there were debatings about circumcision; Apostles separating one from another because the contention was so sharp between them; St. Paul withstanding St. Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed. By giving peace, our Lord could not mean that they would find all quiet within the chosen body, any more than in the outward world.

Did it mean then freedom from internal conflict, from fierce temptations to pride, self-glorification, to lust, to covetousness, to open sin, to unbelief, to apostasy? How little St. Paul took it to signify this, these words from the Epistle to the Ephesians may testify: "We wrestle," he says, "not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places." What description

of a battle could you have more terrible than this? And it is a battle with internal spiritual enemies; and it is a battle which Apostles had to wage as much as their converts. The peace Christ spoke of must be something else than this, or it had not been really left, really given, in spite of the words which seemed to witness that it had.

II. But what wonderful light lay in that clause, "*My* peace I give unto you"! As if he had said: 'You know, 'for you have seen, that I was not exempt from the 'contradiction of the world: it hated me before it 'hated you. And you know that—for your own hearts 'tell you—I was not exempt from the hardness and in- 'gratitude of true as well as false disciples. I endured 'misunderstandings, perverseness, desertion, betrayal, 'before you did. And you can remember that while 'you were sleeping, I was wrestling with unseen 'enemies, with dreadful temptations. Before you had 'any experience of such warfare, I had resisted unto 'blood. My peace then is not exemption from any of 'these trials; and if you wish for one, you cannot 'have the other. But it is precisely that by which I 'was enabled to pass through these; to bear the oppo- 'sition of sinners, not to be crushed by the unkindness 'of friends, to drink the wine-cup to the dregs. That 'is *my* peace, which can live on in an element of strife, 'sorrow, helplessness, even hopelessness; which can 'sustain them and rise out of them, proving itself to 'be mightier. This was my peace, the peace which

'I had in the Father, my filial union with Him, my 'filial trust in Him, which the darkness of all things 'around me, of Nature, of human creatures, of my own 'senses and understanding which I had given up to 'death, could not extinguish, which survived when 'my Will could feel only anguish and desertion, first 'saying, Not mine, but Thine; and then giving up 'the spirit unto the Father's hands. My peace I give 'unto you,—this filial union to Him, filial trust in 'Him who has revealed Himself to you in Me, whose 'love for you is that which I have shown forth in my 'life and death.'

III. In this way the events that followed the night of the Passover, which seemed to confute the words that were spoken upon it, will at last have made them clear. But not in this way only; the sin of the disciples, on that night which more utterly banished peace from their minds than all which they beheld, must itself have told them what they had need of, and where it must be sought. They had trusted in themselves, and had found themselves fools; they had thought they loved their Master, and when love should have flowed forth, it was dry; then came a bitter sense of shame and separation; they were indeed alone. But the Lord turned and looked upon them; the recollection of His love came upon them as it had never come before; the sense of having slighted it overcame the sense of having dishonoured themselves; the tears of Peter came in place of the

remorse of Judas. Then did they know that the peace had been left to them, though till then they had not found it. The love which had been with them so long had not deserted them; though it seemed to be only an image reflected from the past, it was indeed near them. It had crushed them; had broken through their pride; had called out their sorrow; if it was dead, then it had a might even in death. What they had loved was in the grave, but the love was among them more than before, giving them a vision of peace, though all about them and in them seemed at war, a stronger hope than they could realize when He himself told them He should rise again. This love and peace and hope could not be their own; all that was their own they had cast away. This was their wonderful preparation for that evening when He stood again among them, and said, 'Peace be unto you,' and showed them His hands and His side. They were the old words which they had heard often from Him; perhaps the salutation with which he welcomed them each morning; that which they were to bestow upon each house they entered. They were the words which had sounded so solemn and strange on the night before the Crucifixion; they were those of which the savour had been preserved through the hour of their travail; they were those which met them when they felt that a new man was born into the world. He vanished out of their sight; the gift did not depend upon their power of seeing Him. He had left it with them; He had given it to them.

It was a store to which they might have recourse, not in sunny hours, not when all was cheerful in the world without or within, but in times of weariness and desolation. It was a store, not for their eyes, but one for their hearts to feed upon; it was not one which they could appropriate, it was His peace, not theirs. Yet, as He had said "I will be with you," they knew that this Peace was with them. It might be hidden from them, because He was hidden; but in seeking Him they sought it, in finding Him they found it. Not as the world giveth them had He given to them. Its gifts are palpable, tangible. And yet we cannot bring them near to ourselves; we may have them and yet want them. The heart may not be able to enjoy them, though the hand grasps them. This has been the continual complaint against the world's gifts. They are good for nothing except as we may make them good.

"Ours is their wedding garment, ours their shroud."

They are objects of delight or loathing to us according to the state we are in. But they have no power to make that state different. They must have a light from within to show their colours by. The colours do not bring the light, and too generally they find none. Therefore men say, 'These things were so different when we were young. How bright they looked once! How they have faded!' We all know that it is the eye which has become dimmer; the things are as they were. Perhaps they never really seemed much

brighter; in youth there may have been other shadows which we have now forgotten. Only the heart is certain that it ought to enjoy, that it is meant to enjoy, and therefore will persuade itself that it once did enjoy. It has a witness in itself that there is another kind of gift from these, a gift which is directly to the heart, and not to the heart only through the eye; a gift which does not require a particular condition of mind to receive it, but which makes that condition; a gift that brings the light by which it is contemplated, and then throws light upon all things around; a gift which depends upon no accidents, but which compels accidents to obey it, drawing strength and nourishment from those things which seem most contrary to it. And this gift, which all men know that they want, is that which Christ bestowed upon his disciples. Not one which might be very precious if they had peace of mind to entertain it with, but this peace of mind itself. Not a peace of mind which must be produced or kept up by regulating the atmosphere in which it dwells, but which may safely expose itself to all heats and chills,—nay, which makes men most conscious of its power when they are suffering most from either, or from each in succession. Not a peace of mind which we are to keep, but which is to keep us in the knowledge and love of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord. Here is the mystery of this gift; here are the tokens that not as the world gives, He gives, who is the Lord of man's inner being,

not merely of the circumstances which surround men, though He is Lord of these too, and does dispose and govern them in such wise that they shall all be instruments for the manifestation of Himself, and for the redemption of the creature who is formed in His image.

IV. Therefore, brethren, though it was fitting that we should consider these words first in their reference to those who heard them first,—though the history of the Apostles illustrates their meaning and force as no other could,—they must be ours, or they could not have been theirs. All the gifts which were bestowed upon them at the Passover are ours still. If He gave them the bread, and said, "Take, eat: this is my flesh;" if He poured out the wine, and said, "This is the blood of the New Testament," He imparted these treasures by them to all generations; He endowed us with them in their names. This gift of peace could not, as I have shown you, have any special application to the Apostles, merely because the giver was sitting visibly before them. It was when He became invisible that they knew what had been imparted to them; it was when they received it as an invisible blessing. Nor was it theirs because they were stronger or better than others; only when they knew that they were as weak and evil as any did they enter into possession of it. He chose them to be heralds of His Grace and Peace to mankind; if they claimed these gifts in their own right, and not as

stewards, the gifts were not realized. To us, then, as truly as to them,—to us upon the same conditions with them,—does He say, "Peace I leave with you: My peace I give unto you." Far off as this peace may seem to be from us, it is really nigh at hand to every one of us. We must think we pursue it hither and thither, and it seems always in advance of us,—we do not come up with it. But that which we are pursuing is only a shadow; the substance from which it is cast is within. The heart cannot find it abroad; at home the treasure is laid up, though it may be in a chamber we have never visited; in one that we have shunned, because we fancy it to be haunted with strange spectres. Haunted it is with these spectres, and greatly they will scare us, when first we venture in. The Disciples were startled when they found what heartlessness and cowardice were in them, though they had thought themselves ready to die for Him. Such anguish has many a man experienced, when the secret passages of his spirit were suddenly made known to him. He cannot escape the discovery; it often comes to him on a sick-bed, when he is least able to face the terrors. But they may be faced; there is a reward for each one who does not fly from the truth. If he will be humbled by the sight of the dark spectres which dwell in the chambers of his soul's imagery, he will find in them that which is not dark and spectral. He will find the Love, against which the evil in him has been contend-

ing, a perfect form of brightness and purity which the evil spirits are mocking, and which can bid them depart. If he will confess this Presence too; if he will say, not only "*I have sinned,*" but "*Against Thee* have I sinned; against thee, who hast cared for me, sought for me, striven with me," then a new light will burst upon him. In renouncing all his own pretensions to be anything or to have anything, he acquires that which is truly his, an inalienable possession, a treasure in Heaven which thief cannot seize nor moth corrupt. If all our evil lies in resistance to a Righteous Being who is ruling over us, then all good must be a submission to Him. This is Peace,—the peace depending on One who is worthy of our dependence, the peace of not seeking that from outward things which they cannot give, the peace of not seeking that from our own nature which is not in it. The Peace is there, in our hearts, but it is there while the heart is seeking its delight in another, while it is forgetting itself. When it finds its object, it is at peace: it cannot be till then. Therefore Christ left this dowry to all human hearts, when he revealed Himself to them as their proper and ever-present object; in them, and above them; united with them, yet always distinct from them; blending with them as the sky in the far horizon seems to blend with the sea, as the setting sun seems to share his glory between them. This peace therefore is given to men; yet He ever gives it afresh to them. They have it only while they are content to receive it;

the moment they take it as their property, it is gone. Not as the world gives them, He gives. The world teaches us to claim each thing as our own. It says nothing is ours till we can secure it against other men. We hold this peace by the opposite tenure; we have it only while we care to distribute it, while we seek that every one should share it with us. It is theirs, it is ours, because it is His who died for all and who lives for all.

And as this peace was first realized as a deliverance from strife, without and within, so it must be held fast in the midst of the same strife. If ease and sunshine come, it is well; but we are not to look for them. If joyful sensations are given, if our spirits have an unwonted buoyancy and freedom, we are to be thankful; but tomorrow all this may be changed. If we are provoking no hostility, let us ask how that happens; for the Author of this Peace was a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; He was called a friend of publicans and sinners, and a blasphemer.

This Peace was given the night before His crucifixion. When He rose, the pledges of it were His wounded hands and side. They are always the pledges of it. In the communion of His body and blood, we are to learn what it is for ourselves, what it is for mankind. As we partake of that, we confess that it is for the most wretched sons of earth, because it is fixed and eternal in the Heavens.

Sunday before Advent.

November 20, 1859.

EPHESIANS VI. 12.

"FOR WE WRESTLE NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD, AGAINST SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES."

MANY of you think that England may not always be as safe from an invasion as she has reckoned herself in time past. You hold, at all events, that security is dangerous; that preparation against every possibility is a duty. You do not profess to be seers; you may often change your minds about the presages of coming calamity; clouds, that looked black yesterday, may have passed away today. But you say that a nation should not need to speculate on contingencies; that it should be always ready for the worst; that then it may pursue its ordinary occupations calmly; that when it is most conscious of its own strength, it will be least suspicious and restless about the proceedings of its neighbours.

These are powerful arguments; they are supported by others, perhaps even more powerful. It is urged that great collateral benefits are likely to follow from the union of different classes—which are divided by social position, often by strong antipathies—in a common cause; that, great as may be the advantage of disciplined armies, a people which depends wholly on them is sure to become enfeebled, if not to lose its liberties altogether, because its citizens will not feel that it is their call to defend them, and its soldiers may feel that it is in their power to trench upon them; that when the first feels that he can take part in the defence of the soil, he becomes less shut up in his private interests; that the other is reminded for what ends weapons are put into his hands, and that he must never degrade himself into a mere machine or hireling.

I do not say that those who object to these sentiments may not have much to say for themselves, and that they are not entitled to a hearing. If the object is to unite all hearts, the obvious policy, the plain duty, is to recognize the force of all objections, to claim all as wishing well to the commonwealth, however they may differ about the means of serving it; to believe that their admonitions may contain profitable truth, even if you cannot shape your course according to them. A clergyman has, perhaps, from his circumstances and his education, a bias in favour of their conclusions. He must therefore be on his guard, lest he should be persuaded himself, or should try to

persuade others, that want of nerve means love of peace, or absence of preparation, confidence in God. Since he can co-operate so little in the exertions of his countrymen, he must at least be very anxious that he may do nothing to discourage them. He should rather consider earnestly whether, in the fulfilment of his proper function, he may not point out to them some sources of strength which they may be forgetting, some causes of weakness which may make the best service and the best discipline ineffectual.

My text occurred, you may remember, in the Epistle of last Sunday. When I connect it with the subject of which I have just spoken, you may suppose that I wish to turn away your thoughts from the battles that are going on upon this earth,—the battles in which common men are engaged,—to some figurative conflict with unseen powers. I have no such purpose; I believe St. Paul had no such purpose. I believe that the last thought which would have occurred to him was that he was dealing in metaphors. He was assuredly talking of realities, —of a real conflict,—otherwise his vehemence and passion were quite thrown away. He was talking of a conflict with which common men had to do,— with which they had to do in all the common, rough work of their lives. When he says, "*We wrestle not with flesh and blood,*" he does not mean that he had no flesh and blood enemies; notoriously he had

a great many, or he could not have suffered stripes, or spent so much of his life in a prison. He does not mean that the Ephesians had not such enemies, or that men in the times to come would not have them. And he does not mean that the fights stood apart from each other; that the conflict with Jews, or heathens, or false brethren, might take place on one day, and with principalities and powers another. Whenever he was in the one, he was also in the other. When he was scourged, or stoned, or imprisoned, he was tempted to anger and bitterness, or to base and cowardly compliances. And that was a spiritual battle; that was a battle not with visible but with unseen foes; that seemed to him infinitely more serious than the other; upon the issue of that it depended whether he should prevail or be worsted in the other. It is the same, I believe, with us and with our nation at this time. We may be engaged in a battle with flesh and blood enemies; we may have to encounter them on our own soil. But we are engaged in a battle with unseen enemies, with enemies that are assaulting the spirits of us all. It is no Sunday talk that this is so; it is the work of the week-day. Each man, to whatever trade or profession he belongs, is in this strife. He is in it while he is busy about the tasks which that trade or profession imposes upon him. And it depends upon the way in which each man behaves in this battle, whether he shall be of service in the other. It depends upon the way in

which a Nation wrestles with the unseen evils that threaten it, whether it shall be able to repel its flesh and blood enemies, whether it shall have anything that it cares to save from them.

I. In saying this, I am uttering no paradox. I am repeating what has been said thousands of times: that the springs of a nation's internal life are those which we must guard most carefully, if we would guard it from external foes; that when these have not been guarded, when they have been suffered to become corrupt, external violence comes naturally, and cannot be warded off, because the strength is gone which should lift the weapon, because the spirit is gone which should bind the hosts together. I say, brethren, that these are commonplaces which we all know. But they are commonplaces which we have need to reflect upon, and to apply to our own case, and to connect, far more closely than we have been wont to do, with the burning language of St. Paul. Let me try, by just two or three hints, to do this.

1. If I reminded you of the stories we have all read in the last few months of electoral corruption, you would admit that that was a monstrous evil. You would not describe it, in any sense, as metaphorical; you would not say that it had not to do with men's vulgar—their most vulgar—existence. You would observe, perhaps, that however much these acts are to be lamented, legislation affords little help against

them; that an occasional exposure of some detected criminal, a decimation in the ranks of the corruptors and the corrupted, is the only remedy which is likely to be effectual. I am not going to dispute these opinions: they have an appearance of reasonableness; they may be reasonable. But be the remedy what it may, the abomination remains the same. If you read of it in the records of any other country,—if you were told that men of the educated class who aspired to legislate for their land, through a set of agents in the class below them, did what in them lay to debase the minds and destroy the consciences of those in a class lower still,—would not you affirm, 'There are symptoms of deep decay in that country. The more 'moral, the more religious it professes to be, the more 'alarming must be such symptoms, because they show 'that hypocrisy is working side by side with these 'social enormities, sometimes covering them with a 'seemly varnish, sometimes suggesting that they may 'be compensated by acts of devotion or charity'? This would be your judgment of any country which you were contemplating as bystanders. If you heard that a land carrying such a vice in its heart, was invaded by a foreigner, would you not tremble for it? Would you not foretell that, unless there were some earnest effort to extirpate that disease, it would cause a palsy in those who should go forth to oppose him?

And what does your doubtfulness about an external legislative remedy for what you feel to be so

terrible, mean but this? You have lighted upon a plague which is floating all about you; which is spreading its infection so subtly that you know not how to arrest it or where to come up with it; which you feel must be approaching us all; which we all might be visited with if our circumstances placed us within its reach. And is not this an explanation to you of that phrase of the Apostle, "spiritual wickedness in high places"? Can you find a better? Does it not give you just the sense of vagueness, and yet of an actual, tremendous, penetrating curse, which your words and confessions indicate?

2. Think of another evil, which we all know of, which forces itself upon every one who walks through our streets; think of the moral and physical destruction of a great section of one sex to serve the appetites of the other; and consider whether this same language is not the most applicable to that state of things. All are aware of the evil; newspapers proclaim it; benevolent persons try to rescue a few of the victims. You feel that here too legislation may possibly do something to abate some of the outward forms of this mischief and misery. But the principle lies altogether beyond its scope and range. It belongs to another sphere. You feel that, down in the very root of society, there is an evil which requires to be encountered and overcome. You feel that what is destroying the life of society is also destroying the life of individuals,—of the tempter and the tempted; that if

it is encountered and overcome in the body politic, it must also be in the members of the body. What do such words signify? Are you not coming again very near to those of St. Paul, which you were disposed to dismiss as metaphorical? Have not we spiritual wickedness somehow or somewhere to grapple with? Must we not be looking for some armour against it, if the other armour is not to become rusty and helpless?

I speak of this subject in connection with passing events, because the real force of a country, which it opposes to an invader, must lie in the young men of its different classes. I believe that with reference to them we may be deceived by a false and mischievous analogy. It may be said that our armies abroad have been anything but pure and self-restraining, and yet that they have done great deeds. The fact cannot be gainsaid. Who does not rejoice that such deeds have been possible, and that men who have yielded to many temptations, have taken part in those deeds; so showing that there was a noble and divine element in them which that which was contradicting it could not subdue, and which either great crises, or the habitual feeling of discipline and duty, could call forth into triumphant vigour? That divine element, one may confidently trust, would be awakened in numbers by the holier task of defending their own soil and the graves of their fathers. But it should be also remembered, that if it is crushed beforehand by the recklessness of dissipation, and the meanness which continually ac-

companies recklessness, this motive may be found far less prevalent and inspiring than the sense of shame and dishonour, which is worked into the very nature of the professed soldier. The citizen must be braced to a work which is not his customary one, by motives which the trained servant of the camp can in a measure dispense with. And if he has done all that in him lies to deprive himself of that preparation,—if he has cultivated the habits which make his hearth and home indifferent, even distasteful to him,—it is an idle dream that the mere name of defender, however much he may prize it while it is a mere name and has only to do with holiday exercises, will give him the courage which is demanded for action. Nay, if he has that courage as a gift from above, if it has been nurtured in an English school, the shame for evil deeds, the sense of alienation from those whose counsels he has despised, the difficulty of making out to himself what it can signify whether a country should be free or enslaved, may lead him, as it has led so many others, to sell to the best bidder the faculties which sin has not been able to extinguish.

3. Especially is this likely to be the case if he has yielded to another form of evil, more characteristic perhaps of our times than that to which I last alluded, and I should say more debasing and withering. Debts and gambling might turn a bold spirit, like Catiline's, into a conspirator against the order of society in his land. How many more have they turned into betrayers

of their country to some foreigner, whose success might rid them of a burden, and secure to them a reward! Surely this spirit, the spirit of extravagance and the passion for getting money by any means, the most adventurous, the least toilsome being the best, must do more than anything to destroy the patriotism of a people, to create mutual suspicions, to make the pursuit of a common and general end impossible; to encourage therefore the hope of any one looking greedily at our territory, or only wishing to humble us on that one point upon which all, from the highest to the lowest, seem to be most sensitive. And has not the money-getting, gambling habit of mind, exactly that indefinable, diffusive, penetrating character, which corresponds to the description of spiritual wickedness,—wickedness which the sharpest swords cannot touch, or the best devised laws provide against?

We have, no doubt, a way of speaking of these curses, which is very different from St. Paul's. We denote them by abstract names; he regarded them as actual powers. Our method serves us tolerably well in easy times. The question is, whether we shall not be obliged to fall back upon his, if we come into those difficult times which some of us look for. I believe all persons who are struggling with evil, in any of its forms, find it to be a power; a power which is ready to spring upon them, to hold them down, to take them captive. They must resort to the Apostle's language, or some that is equivalent. It describes

what is to them the most terrible of all facts. How not to sink under the power; how they may be raised out of it if they sink, is for them the only subject which is worth considering. It is altogether a personal subject; they themselves are in the fight; they must conquer or perish. Yet it is altogether a general, a universal question. They cannot separate themselves from their kind; they cannot discover that they are less prone to wrong than any other people; they cannot guess about other men's perils, except from what they know of their own. And they cannot understand those nice distinctions which some people draw between spiritual wickedness and ordinary wickedness. It seems to them that ordinary wickedness,—if under that name we include all that goes to make men murderers, adulterers, thieves, liars, —must be spiritual wickedness. The impulse to be a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, a liar, assaults the spirit of the man. It addresses not his eyes, or ears, or taste, or touch, but him; it tries to withdraw him away from a law by which he confesses that he is bound, from a Father who has spoken to him, and is speaking to him, in whispers or in thunders continually. It does not seem therefore to them more strange than it seemed to the Hebrew prophets, that this law should reveal itself to nations and to individuals through the threatened famine, or pestilence, or invasion; that this Father should by such warnings be turning His children to Himself. The

sanitary precautions, or the rifle corps, they welcome as signs that men are alive to the message, and are honestly taking means to avert the danger. What more they desire is, that these measures should not be frustrated of their end through that selfishness which leads men to sacrifice the health and comfort of their neighbour to their own petty personal advantages, the well-being and freedom of their country to their own grovelling ambition, lust, and avarice.

II. These are spiritual evils, and therefore they must be fought against with spiritual armour. When we speak of this, we are not indulging in metaphors more than in the former case. The remedy is as little fantastic as the disease. That Right and Wrong are in some sense the great adversaries, that they have been so since the foundation of the world, most persons practically acknowledge, even those who in theory contend that right and wrong can be resolved into the expedient and the inexpedient, or that one is only a modification of the other. What the Scripture adds to this old and general belief is, the assertion that Right is the nature of God; that a living Being, the Author of this Universe and all which is in it, is pledged to assert and vindicate the Right; that Wrong is a lie and a rebellion; and that in yielding to it we yield to the father of lies, to him who would not abide in the truth. Starting from that primary maxim, it goes on to affirm that Christ, the Son of God, took on Him the nature of man,

that He might wrestle with this enemy of Right and Truth, and might deliver man from him. And thence it proceeds to that which is especially and characteristically the New Testament doctrine, that which St. Paul is asserting, here and everywhere,—that the Spirit of the Father and the Son is wrestling in the great human society, is wrestling in each nation and in each man, with that spirit of Wrong and Untruth.

No one of these principles, each of which is unfolded out of the other, has, I repeat it, the least element of fantasy, but is the antagonist of all that is fantastical. And in them, I believe, lies the strength and hope for nations and for men in the day of battle. There would be something infinitely discouraging in the thought of our moral weaknesses and sins. The discouragement would be still more, if one began to reproach another with them,—if any one could say, 'They belong to that man, but not to me; to that 'school or sect, but not to mine.' In such quarrelling and mutual recriminations lie the very pledges of discomfiture, because the hindrance to all united exertion is there. And religion might come in to deepen our fears, to lessen our confidence, by representing that our offences were provoking the anger of God, and that He would assuredly visit us for them. But if the old faith is true,—if God is a God of Right, and not of mere Power;—if right is not an abstraction, but is seated on the throne of heaven;—if Christ has proved it to be mighty over wrong, and He sits a Redeemer,

a Judge, a King for ever;—if, when our spirits are most dead, there is a Spirit to quicken them, and He is not far from any of us;—if He is bidding those whose spirits are in the closest bondage, to cast off their chains, and rise up, and walk;—if that Spirit is not partial or limited in his operations, but urges saint and sinner alike to distrust himself and trust in an eternal and loving God,—then, brethren, as there is nothing that need make us fear while we *have* moral strength and unity, so there is nothing in our worst condition that can prevent us from obtaining that moral strength and unity. We have only fairly to look our evils in the face, concealing none of them from ourselves, excusing none of them to each other, confessing them all to God. We have but to understand and remember continually the utter inefficiency of all physical appliances, if the inner strength and heart are absent. We have but to claim our share in all the sins of our country, not thrusting them upon other men, but owning that they belong to our evil nature, and how little we have fought against them. We have but to ask God to take away our self-conceit and pride, that we may be fit to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. And then it will be seen that the evils, which have clung so close to us and pressed so heavily upon us, are at last—not as our enemies may think, as we may be sometimes tempted to think ourselves, part of our national substance,—but rather a poison in the blood, which may

be expelled, the tyranny of an evil spirit who may be cast out. And then God will clothe us in His own armour. And we shall go forth, in the name and the power of Right, against all who would set up power against Right, and therefore would establish an Antichrist instead of the Christ. And God's Spirit will stir up our wills to bring forth good works, the plenteous fruit of which shall redound to His glory, and shall bring rewards to the whole land.

So will it be, while we are in that daily war which we have to wage with the powers of evil that are seeking to destroy the life of our country and our own. So will it be, if God should send us the huge and fearful chastisement of a foreign enemy threatening our shores, or even entering our borders. We may trust humbly that even such a visitation will be turned to the extirpation of our vices, to the healing of our divisions, to the preparation of our hearts for the tasks which God has appointed us to perform, and which we have neglected. In that battle, as in the others from which we cannot shrink, we may ask that the Captain of the Lord's Host will Himself be our leader and champion. And if no mortal lips should speak words of encouragement and hope, that voice which is as the sound of many waters will say to each fighter, and all the good men of every age will echo it, "Be ye faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of Life."

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